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CHRISTIANITY IN CONTEXT

FRANCISCO R. DEMETRIO, S.J.

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PREFACE

This volume contains fifteen essays which may be grouped under three themes which will in turn comprise the three parts of the book: religious (part one), politico-moral (part two), and culturo-historical (part three).

Part One contains five essays which seek a deeper understanding of our Christian faith. Except for the fourth essay "Christ the Center: Our Beginning and Our End" which appeared last year in *Philippine Priests Forum*, they are being published for the first time.

Part Two comprises six essays on civic, moral, and political topics. "Reflections on Separation of Church and State" was published by *Philippine Priests Forum* in 1976 when the municipal/city *sanggunians* were first established throughout the land. The other five essays have appeared over several years in one of the five weeklies of Cagayan de Oro City, the *Mindanao Star*, under the column "Cultural Corner." The topics treated concern the problems confronting the citizens of at least one among many rapidly modernizing urban centers of the country, Cagayan de Oro, in which the author has worked for the past fifteen years.

Part Three contains four essays on local history and culture. The fourteenth essay "Our Bag of Gold Is Yours" has appeared under a different title and in slightly modified form as "Lest We Forget Our Roots" in Father Leonardo N. Mercado's book *Filipino Thought on Man and Society*. These are an honest endeavor

to understand more deeply our traditions in the hope that this understanding may shed guiding lights upon the dark waters of the last two decades of the twentieth century upon which we have begun to embark.

In the Appendix, as "clincher" to the themes touched upon in a good number of the essays, the author is offering again the poem "Ode to Water" which was first published in 1962 by the *Manila Chronicle* under the simpler title "Water."

This year being the fourth centennary of Jesuit presence in the Philippines (1581-1981), it is hoped that this little volume will help to commemorate this happy event.

Francisco R. Demetrio, S.J.

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To

Father Antonio Sedeño

and

all the Jesuits
who for four hundred years labored
in the Lord's vineyard
in these Islands

Part One

RELIGIOUS

WATER AND THE PRIESTHOOD
(Homily on the Silver Jubilee Celebration)

Life is like woven fabric or cloth. The events that fill it from beginning to end are the strands or threads—some going up and down, or vertically; others going from one side to the other and back again, horizontally. Some are brilliant living lines, straight, curved, zigzagging; others are pale and grey, with spots or circles or dashes. But the finished fabric is what counts. The many strands of varied hues and shapes make up the whole. The whole acquires a certain tone or character, and this is what gives a fabric meaning, makes it desirable, or worthy of being offered to someone loved.

It is this woven fabric of my life, composed of many strands, colors and shapes, but altogether stamped with a tone and trend peculiarly its own, which you help me raise to God this evening as a gift: a gift given in return for the gift of life and the priesthood—life given to me some 56 years ago, the priesthood the past 25.

Yet my years as a priest are really more than just 25. There is a depth to them, a prehistory, an archeology, if you will. It is this earlier portion behind the 25 in the priesthood which I would like to delve into, with your indulgence. I promise to be brief, accurate and interesting. Through this background, it will be possible for you to appreciate with me the meaning of the past years as a priest. And thus our thanksgiving and offering will be all the more meaningful.

In Carmen across the bridge, then a dreamy little barrio, on a bright morning, on June the 18th, in 1920, God brought me into the world. My world then was composed of a rather large house, made of combined wood, bamboo and nipa materials; two-storied, the lower enclosed for storage of grain. Ahead of me in that world were a sister, our eldest, and two elder brothers. In our yard were large fruit trees: chicos, cacaos, and nangka and a large mango tree nearby; roses, jasmins, and dahlias grew in our garden. A little removed from our backstairs was our well, where we drew water, washed and showered.

Less than half a kilometer from our house was the large river of Cagayan, originally called Kalambagohan or Kalagyangan.

The well and the river are significant to me for I have always been fascinated by water. Perhaps it is because I am gemini, and the "Gemini" (meaning "Twins") in Greek and Roman mythology, refer to the "Dioscuri" or Sons of Zeus, Castor and Pollux. They are the brothers of Aphrodite or Venus, goddess of the sea. And the Twins or Gemini are the patrons of water-borne travellers. Thus their connection with water.

Let me return to my own fascination with water. For years, before I attended classes at St. Augustine and the Ateneo on the other side of the river, I loved the Sundays and holidays when, after coming from church, the entire family (then enlarged by the coming of our youngest sister), would pack food and utensils and hasten to a beach in Bonbon or Bayabas for a dip in the shimmering sea. I also loved the cool waters silvering the brown limbs of my companions and mine as we basked under the noon-sun opposite the *convento;* and I recall the moonlit nights when the family along with our cousins would hire a *baroto* and go up the river as far as Kalinogan, singing as we rowed along.

When I began schooling in Cagayan, I had to cross the river at least four times a day. Before the steel bridge was built in the 1930s, after one of the frequent floods had washed away the low wooden bridge, I had to cross the river on a baroto or a *balsa.* The

waters always caught my fancy. Crossing the river on afternoons after school, I would imagine myself flying over the waters on a magic vehicle, rising above it and dipping down again, darting across to the hills in the distance with *Santa Cruces* on them, and suddenly speeding back again over the waters of the river. I fancied myself like a bird or a dragon fly, light and free—one of those daydreams common in late childhood and early adolescence.

Little did I realize then the great things the Lord had done to myself and to mankind through this common, lowly, unassuming element—water. Yet my being charmed by it already betokened my own understanding of its symbolic potentialities which I would enshrine eventually in a poem I wrote in praise of water, "Ode to Water."* (See Appendix.)

I remember very well Cagayan river in a flood in 1933. The murky waters had reached almost the level of the highway in Carmen. I saw a rather large house from up river being hurried along by the torrents, a brown dog barking on the roof as the house sped away to sea. I also remember coming from school at noon, and seeing a playmate of mine jump from the wooden bridge to meet a large piece of log coming fast towards him. The force of the floodwaters pushed him under the bridge together with the log he was after. I saw his fingers helplessly sticking out through the floor cracks of the bridge. His body was found near Bonbon three days afterwards. Only a few years ago, the same river deprived our Philippine Studies Department of two very promising young men, then working for their MA degree.

Water makes things live and grow, renewed and refreshed. It also brings destruction. But no matter. There is still much on the side of water which sustains our hope.

Moses, you recall, was found by Pharaoh's daughter among the bullrushes of the Nile. What a difference this incident made for the future history of the Israelite people. Under the lead of Moses who was saved from the waters, they attained freedom from

oppression and slavery walking dryshod across the Sea of Reeds.

Mankind was to benefit forever when the Savior came to John in the Jordan to be baptized by him in company with common ordinary sinful humanity. The blood and the water which flowed from the side of the Redeemer, pierced by a lance, have mingled with the rains and the waters from the storm which broke over Jerusalem at his death. And the blood and the water from Christ's broken heart have found their way to the rivers and seas of the world. Through Baptism, at once a dying and a rising from the death of sin with Christ, man is now a new creature, a child of God, a brother of Jesus Christ.

At the central worship of the Church, at this Mass which Father Regalado, myself and our brother priests are celebrating in thanksgiving for the gift of priesthood, the same bloody sacrifice of Calvary which began at the Last Supper is once again being re-enacted, made present before our eyes and our minds. In the Mass, again the lowly element of water which symbolizes our frail human nature is being offered in sacrifice together with the sacrifice of Jesus Christ of his own human nature. In doing so, he transforms us from sinful humanity to a redeemed race: his brothers and sisters adopted children of the Father, co-heirs of heaven with Christ.

In water things and people sink and drown. But it can also make them float or swim.

Water like earth is dense. But it does not remain so, even when it hardens into ice. For under the sun or fire, water is transformed, it vanishes into the air. However, it then comes down again as rain or dew to water the soil into greenness. If it hardens into ice, cold and hard, still it can give refreshment on a warm afternoon. Water then is very ambivalent.

It is in this ambivalence that it has tremendous symbolic potentialities.

The past 25 years in the priesthood have been characterized also by water, at least as far as my own personal life goes. But the

link between my priesthood and water is not meaningful only for me. It has meaning meant for you.

If our human nature is symbolized by water at Mass, if God's design to use a frail human person as tool to give divine life to others is symbolized by water in baptism, then to be sure, God has been using my weak human nature, through the gift of priesthood, in order to bring his forgiveness, hope, concern, joy, and life to others.

The priesthood like water is ambivalent. The ambivalence lies in this that the priest to accomplish his mission must remain truly human, but at the same time be more than human. Like the giants of old, his feet must be firmly planted on the ground, but his head and his hands must reach out to the skies. We know that to operate on two zones carries its own built-in hazards.

Today, then, as we offer the woven fabric of our life as gift to God, do us the favor and pray that I, my fellow jubilarian, and all of us priests, may never forget to be compassionate. Compassionate because we are *from* you, the people, *of* you, and *for* you. To remember that we are as common and ordinary as anyone else; that we are liable to selfishness, the lust of the eyes, and the pride of life; that we are ringed round with fallibility; that evil lies in our hearts. And ever to bear in mind that by our vows we are pledged to do our best daily to cast aside this cloak of frailty. However, this is the second prayer, that even as we never forget our fallibility, we should also realize that man is not meant by God to remain prone to failure and ruin, but that, if he must become truly human, he must do something about his weakness. To do something about one's weakness is to be truly open to the Divine, to allow God to touch you to the very core, to accept the fact that without God man is nothing, and that with God, man can be more than human. He can become an instrument for helping others accept and do something about their weakness.

My own experience and that of my fellow priests who do all they can to rise above our human conditions have been that the

priesthood is God's design to bring us closer to him, even as a holy marriage is the other way to bring people close to God. In the priesthood for the priests, and in holy matrimony for married people, God's offer of love is fully reciprocated.

Lastly, please remember, the priest is from the people. He has been ordained not for himself but for others. My priesthood is not my own, not even for my family. It is God's gift to all of you. It is a gift of service for others. Pray for us that we may be true like water until the end, but, like water, too, transformed once the fire of God's divine Spirit has been turned on our spirits in full heat in our last moments in the priesthood.

July 15, 1976

CHRISTMAS: A FEAST OF LIGHTS

The first word of God when he created the world was: "Let there be light." And there was light. God's power made the light conquer darkness. The Jews had a feast of lights during which they lighted huge torches. The Indians, too, celebrate a feast of lights in honor of their goddess Kali. For us Christians, Christmas is a feast of lights. That is why we deck out our homes, our stores and our streets with bright and multicolored lights during this season. From the most ancient past until today man has always understood the meaning behind the symbol of light. We might spend a little while on the symbolism of light and its opposite, darkness—darkness which is not only of the world outside of man, but also of darkness within man's interior world of the heart. And it is because of this latter darkness that God sent his only Son to be born in order that he might serve to be our interior light.

Let us look back in imagination to the first day of men on earth. They must have been terrified when they saw the sun sink behind the hills for the first time. When pitch darkness covered everything, how they huddled close to each other. The first people discovered the use of fire only after many centuries. So their first experience of darkness was also linked with experience of cold. The day after, and the next, however, made the first people realize that day and night, light and darkness follow a regular pattern, the pattern of succession. Yet this assurance was shattered again when one moonlight night they suddenly saw the

moon darken, or the sun early in the afternoon suddenly become dark so that cocks began to crow and bats to issue from their hideouts. This was the first eclipse. This experience made man recall his fearsome experience of the first night on earth. Generally, although light conquers darkness, yet at times darkness gets the better of light.

After our first parents discovered fire, after they had fashioned tools out of wood or bone or stone, they were then no longer simple food gatherers. Whereas before they were, like the birds and the animals, dependent for their sustenance on what they could gather from trees, and forests or from rivers, unable to conserve and produce food, now they could plant fruit trees, or corn or rice in the soil. Our first parents' encounter with the earth through the discovery of agriculture enlightened their minds further on the existence of another regular pattern. The soil of the earth follows a certain law: there is time for breaking the soil, for combing the field, for sowing, for weeding, for harvesting, for gathering into barns, for rest and enjoyment and celebration, until they returned again to the beginning of the cycle of activities connected with tilling the land. Yet, even in this regular pattern of activities and seasons which generally led to harvest and storing in the barns, there were times when the harvest did not follow. From experience, our parents knew that too much cold and too much heat, typhoons, locusts, floods and fires destroyed their labor: the flowers did not mature but withered and fell too soon; so no seed was formed, no green fruit was born, lacking this, no ripe fruit could be plucked. Hunger stalked the land. It was like the original experience of fear again, under the darkness, in the cold, without fire, on that first night on earth.

Thus, man came to realize that sowing is not always crowned with harvesting, even as he had experienced that whenever his wife conceived, no sure promise was given that a child would be born. Between the sowing and the harvesting, between the planting and the plucking, many things could happen that might ren-

der void the sweat of his brow.

Thus our first parents even as they understood the victory of light over darkness, of order and regularity over disorder and chaos, yet they also realized that at times, darkness gets the better of light, disorder over order. They realized, too, that this took place not only outside in the realm of nature and the cosmos of things, but also within the world of their own hearts. Through the symbol of light and darkness, of successful and unsuccessful toil, man realized the ceaseless struggle between right and wrong, between truth and untruth, between good and evil. All this opposition was symbolized beneath the image of light and darkness. Man realized, too, that the seat and center of justice is to be found within his own heart.

Cain's murder of his own brother Abel, David's treachery against Uriah and his desire to steal Uriah's wife, the betrayal of Jesus by Judas, Peter's denial of his own master, Pilate's washing of his hands of responsibility when he could have interposed to prevent a mockery of justice and law. All these are not things of the past. We have witnessed how brother seeks to destroy brother because of politics or inheritance; how prestige and position have become a badge for licentious living and murder; there are Judases even today, in high and low places. Friends still prove false under the constraint of threat or fear. People in authority and power could restore peace and order to our troubled world and land, could solve the rampant injustice and oppression of the many by a few, could make this country move forward in the way of economic and political and moral development if they only had the guts to do their sworn duty; but like Pilate, they wash their hands of their oath and responsibility. If man's heart is the source of ill, it can also be the spring of goodness. Abel, Isaac, Jacob, Joseph whom his brothers sold, the great prophets who spoke boldly and lost their lives, the young and innocent David, Ruth, Judith the fearless woman, Moses the unimpeachable law-giver, Gideon the judge, Joseph the just, Mary the pure,

and John the Baptist, the humble servant of the Lord—all these were just persons, children of the light. Their brood, however, has not altogether disappeared from the face of the earth. Even today! Yet history bears witness that very often it is the forces of darkness that get the better of light. So ever since man became conscious of his own self and heart, ever since his conscience was awakened, he has always sighed and longed for the only Being with the power to save him from his own self and heart, and his complicity with deceit, with injustice, with evil, with darkness. For, in the beginning the Lord had assured mankind that he alone can make light victorious over darkness; for he said: "Let there be light." And there *was* light.

Christmas is the feast of lights for Christians. Where is the source of light in man? In his understanding, his conscience, his freedom. But this human light is easily dimmed because man's will is inclined to envy, selfishness, dishonesty. In order to light up the interior world of man's heart, man needs God's light. The son of God came precisely to be our Light. He is the light of the world. The sun, the moon, the stars, our fire, our lamps and lights, through him, have acquired a new and added brilliance. Darkness of mind, hardness of heart, have been penetrated by this Light. Everything has been transformed. For man has acquired through this Light a new life. God has done all that he could to save man from himself. If today man is still living in darkness, that is man's making, not God's.

The feast of lights invites us to lead lives patterned after this heavenly light. The bright lights in our homes and streets are but symbols of the dawning of the divine light who came in order to light our way. Great joy will be ours when we receive this Light in Holy Communion. May He, the true Light from true Light, shine in our minds, and hearts today and always.

December 1972

NEW YEAR'S DAY

Today is the feast of the beginning. With the New Year should begin a new life: a new realization of the truth of man, his beginning and his destiny. In the New Year celebration even as in the celebration of your birthday, although something new begins, there is something that remains: that is *you*. Both the New Year and the birthday celebrations are important events. Not only because thereby many things happen that make us happy: gift-giving, felicitations and best wishes and a general spirit of joy, but because they are anniversaries of a very important event for each one of us personally, as well as for the entire cosmos.

New Year is the anniversary or the wheeling round again of the cycle of time. And time was born on the Day of Creation. Your birthday is the wheeling round again of your time outside your mother's womb. Your birth is the start of time and history for you. For you personally, the world and time were not created until you were born. We reckon your span of life on earth only from the day your first cry was heard. So every New Year and every birthday is really a celebration of the Day of Creation: of the world and of man.

You may understand Creation either as the absolute coming to birth of Matter, in whatever form matter first appeared out of nothing. Or you may take creation as the gradual shaping or ordering of the formless mass which lay as substrate beneath everything that could be seen or touched into the multitudinous

forms and shapes of things that together make up the cosmos or the ordered world. And this has come about through the processes of creative evolution directed by God's Hand: the brute atoms rising to living forms, past the ladder of life where growing plants and trees first took rise, through animals and cattle that feel and react with man, until the appearance of man himself with his power to think, to understand, to grasp the truth, to attach himself to truth through love, friendship and freedom—in whatever sense we understand Creation, it must remain the most significant event in the history of man and his world. On this day of its anniversary, we shall therefore try to enter deeper into the mystery of our beginnings. We hope that having glimpsed further into it, we may be filled with a resolve to ever be mindful of it, so that we may not be overwhelmed by the cares of daily living. For these are in fact secondary beside the one great truth of man: that though he has great ambitions and achievements, his beginnings are lowly. And it is in accepting his lowly beginnings that he remains worthy of his high calling.

Creation means the coming to birth of being, of reality, of life, consciousness, intelligence, freedom, love. Before Creation, there was absolutely nothing outside of God who is the Ground and Granite of Being, Reality and Life.

Before Creation, there was no scent of jasmin and dama de noche, no delight in the cool of the evening breeze brushing your cheeks; nor glint of gold on newly drenched coconut fronds under the afternoon sun; no thrill at the singing of the tulihaws, no soothing sound of the waves breaking on sandy beach; no warmth in touch of hands closing on each other; no beauty in the first smile a child gives its mother; no words of encouragement, no exchange of faith until death, no jumping of heartbeat at the sound of familiar voices long awaited, at the discovery of truth, the findings of science in the depths of the sea or in the far reaches of space. Before Creation there was no poetry. No liturgy. No worship. No song. There was none of these things simply

because the world of things, the universe, the cosmos, the human world of time and history were not yet born. Then the creative Word was spoken. And Nothingness quickened into Something. And lo, there was Matter, milling in countless atoms in the womb of the primeval waters. And it was dark: the darkness of primeval night before light came to be. The creative Word spoke again, and there was light. And the creative spirit of God hovered over the atoms heaped in formless mass in the waters. Under the Spirit and the Light things were gradually formed, each according to its nature.

This Nothingness, the Watery Womb of things, the Mothering Darkness before the first breaking of Light—these are part and parcel of the fabric of created Matter and everything compounded with Matter, including man. Despite our natural gifts of mind and heart whereby we are justly called lords of creation; despite our supernatural gifts of grace and the call to eternal union with Ground of Being and Reality: the three-ringed Center of the Universe—man is in origin nothing; water and darkness were the wombs that first enclosed him in the beginning. His closeness to water is seen in the many floods and innundations that periodically overwhelm his habitation as in the case of Noah and the Red Sea—events which are at once death-dealing and life-giving. And when man is born again unto the sonship of God, through baptism, it is in water that he dies to the old and rises to the new. Man, too, is a child of night, and all that darkness symbolizes. There is in man an element that is dark, sinister, evil. It is because of this that the Prince of Darkness has a hold on the heart of man. But the light has shone in the dark. And man is now become also the child of light and all that light symbolizes: order, reason, intellect, understanding, freedom.

We are inclined in the course of life through time and history to forget this very basic structure of our existence: our nothingness, our affinity with water and with the night. To realize this deep down is to be true to our human situation and essential

structure. It is to be humble. Despite the magnificent achievements that man over the years has scored in all areas of experience and life, man will remain humble and grateful if he constantly remembers his origins. To do so is to be worthy of our high destiny. To do so is to be exalted. God lifts up those who humble themselves.

January 1973

CHRIST THE CENTER: OUR BEGINNING AND OUR END

Your life and mine is like a circle, i.e. a round of seasons: a season to sow and to reap; to laugh and to weep; to be born, and a time to be buried.[1] Man of old thus viewed human life before historical records were written. Even after man wrote history, from Herodotus to Toynbee, this more ancient view has not been supplanted. Human life is a circle, a wheel.[2] The genius of Christianity only gave the wheel a new orientation. Before Christ, the wheel rotated only around man; the result, it was caught in a rut. After Christ, the wheel not only revolved around man but also around the God-made-man. The circle of life then began to move forward, describing a spiral as it went, attracted by the Magnet, the three-Ringed Center of the Universe, three times holy, *El Gibbor.*[3]

In the mind of the ancient man, the beginning of the circle is also its end; or, rather, that the circle has no beginning nor end. Whether the circle be large or small, every point described is equally distant from the center.

The center was symbolized by a city like Jerusalem, a mountain or hilltop like Calvary, a tree like the Cross, or a rock like the *Ka-aba* of the Muslims.[4] It is at the center that the water of life and the fruit of the tree of life are found. The center, then, is the seat of life, power, holiness, or reality.[5] Whoever leads the cycle of life must keep in touch with the center if life is to be meaningful and real. Consider a wheel. Have the central core or axis, and

the spokes and the outer disc are intact. Take away the core and the wheel falls apart.

Kings, shamans, prophets, priests and heroes of old had to journey to the center, and there drink the waters of life or eat of the fruit of the tree of life.[6] Only then did they obtain power, wisdom, dignity, holiness. In this journey, the hero or the king did not go alone. In spirit, in concern and anxiety, the entire community went with him. For neither the hero, nor the king nor the prophet nor the priest undertook the journey for his own self. He did it for the sake of the community whose health or survival he had vowed to foster. The various helpers the hero met along the way, as we know from folktales—the kind animals, the fairy godmothers, the benevolent dead—are all symbolic of the communal concern felt by the community for the journey of their hero. For his failure meant the failure of the group; and his success, their common victory.

The center to which the hero had to journey was full of dangers.[7] The road bristled with fierce and strange enemies: winged lions, huge giants. The vessel of the water of life and the tree of life were guarded by enormous serpents and dragons. The hero had to fight them all. However difficult the way and the access to his goal, he had to proceed and battle valiantly. In the struggle he could die and be destroyed. But because he had gotten hold of the vessel of the water of life, or the fruit of the tree, victory was assured. He was refreshed, renewed and even transformed. From an old man he became youthful again. He returned to his people, endowed with new powers, to heal the sick, counsel the doubtful, settle disputes, read the hearts of men, protect them from the attacks of demons and spirits, commune with the divine.[8] In other words, having experienced life, holiness, reality at *their* source, he then became the center for the community. In him power, reality, holiness, divine life were present to others.

Jesus Christ, the hero of Christians, too, had to journey to the center. For him, the center was the city Jerusalem, and when in

Jerusalem, the center was the hilltop, upon this hill was planted the Tree of the Cross: to the Christian, the Cross is the Tree of Life, because by eating the fruit of that Tree, by appropriating the merits of Christ's death through baptism and communion—the one a dying with him as well as a rising again, the other, a commemoration of his sacrifice of himself for the sake of the Christian community—he partakes of the life of God, the life of grace.[9]

His journey to the center, his meeting with the forces that led to his death, had begun three years before when he left his mother behind in order to begin his life in public. But this journey had started much earlier, 33 years before when he was conceived in Mary's womb and was born in Bethlehem. Thus we must go back farther in history 18 thousand years before when Yahweh chose Abraham, commanded him to leave his native Ur, go into Canaan for he was destined to become the father of many nations; and out of his loins was to come the promised Redeemer. And harking much farther still into the past, out of history into eternity, we know from St. Paul that "before the world was made God had chosen us, chosen us in Christ" for it was God's hidden plan "that he would bring everything together under Christ, as head, everything in the heavens and everything on earth; "for Christ was first to be born from the dead," and "because God wanted all things to be reconciled through him and for him . . . by his death on the Cross" (Col. 1, 18-20). It, too, was the will of the Father to make Christ not only the end but also the beginning of all things "for through him all things came to be; *not* one thing had its being but *through* him" (John 1, 3). The will of the Father to make Christ the beginning and the end, or the Center, was fulfilled in historical times precisely by his death on the Cross.

In the journey of Christ to the Cross, he had to contend with many foes: foremost among these were his own followers who after he had revealed his serious intent to journey to Jerusalem

no longer walked with him. They had thought he was a worldly leader. But he was not. His foes also included those who would like to believe but lacked the courage to live up to the demands of their faith, like the young man who had many possessions. Above all, the foes of Christ were those who, willingly or unwillingly, allowed themselves to be used by the enemy of mankind, the enemy who led our first parents to sin, that perverse will opposed to God's will, the mystery of evil at work in the universe, alluring the heart of man in order to divert him from the path that would lead to the true center. This same enemy dogged the steps of Christ from the very first days of his public life. In the desert he tried to dissuade Christ from setting his face straight toward his appointment in Jerusalem. Once in Jerusalem, the devil engineered the opposition and hatred of the Jews against Christ; this cunning foe put dissatisfaction into the ranks of the Apostles when they quarrelled among themselves as to who was the greater. He led Judas to frustration with Christ's purpose to die for the Community, and finally got Judas to betray him. In Gethsemane, Satan tried to inject doubt into Christ's will in regard to the usefulness of his sacrifice to redeem men from sin, since in order to redeem men there were those who sinned to bring this about. This temptation was so severe, Christ sweated blood. While Christ hung on the Cross, Satan employed one last device to make Christ doubt the truth of his own claim. Satan inspired the crowd to shout "Let the Christ step down from the Cross, if he is God, and we shall believe him." But Christ did not flinch. He fought to the end. He died: the offspring of the serpent did bruise his heel. He died. And the veil of the temple was rent, the bowels of the earth were shaken, the sun was darkened, there was thunder and lightning—all these were symbolic of the rending of the power of death, of the power of sin, of the power of the devil.[10] In his death, we have washed in the waters that bring us new life through baptism; we have partaken of the fruit of the Tree, through the Holy Eucharist, the food of our souls. Our hero

fought with his foes not for himself, but for us, the Community of believers. And he won. His victory over sin and death and the things that lead to death was ours, too. Even if we shall die, we shall rise again like him, the "first to be born among the dead." Christ our beginning is our Center, our source of new life.

If Christ is the Center, he is our beginning. Now we shall see that he is also our end. For when our hearts have beat their last, it is Christ whom we shall meet on the other side of the water. For after the death of Christ, the wheel of life does continue to revolve around man, but now no longer caught in a rut from whence there is no escape. Life now revolves also around the God-made-man; it has gained a forward movement, describing spirals as it goes, attracted to the Magnet, the three-Ringed Center of the Universe: three-Personed God, all holy, almighty. God is the Center of the Universe, Christ is the Center of Christians and the world, a good Christian is the center for all those who like him are journeying in faith and patience toward the Beginning who is also our End.

Notes

[1]*Ecclesiastes,* Chapter 3.

[2]Mircea Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return,* trans. by William R. Trask, (New York: Pantheon Books Inc., 1954), pp. 87f; 112 ff.

[3]Mircea Eliade. *Patterns in Comparative Religion,* trans. by Rosemary Sheed, (Cleveland New York: The Ward Publishing Company, 1963), pp. 367 ff. and 380 ff. Cf. also his *Images and Symbols: Studies in Religious Symbolism,* trans. by Philipp Mairet, (New York: Sheed and Ward), pp. 27f, esp. 41 ff.

[4]Eliade. *The Myth of the Eternal Return,* op. cit., pp. 12-17.

[5]Ibid., p. 17.

[6]Eliade. *Patterns in Comparative Religion,* op. cit., pp. 270 ff: 298f; cf. also his *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstacy.* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), pp. 270 ff.

[7]Mircea Eliade. *Rites and Symbols of Initiation: The Mysteries of Birth and Rebirth,* trans. by Willard R. Trask, (New York: Harper Torchbooks, 1965), pp. 81 ff.

[8]Ibid., pp. 58 ff; 101ff.

[9]*The Documents of Vatican II,* "Constitution on the Sacred Liturgy," (New York: Guild Press, 1966), pp. 139 ff.

[10]John Henry Cardinal Newman. *Discourses Addressed to Congregations,* (London: Longmans, Green and Company, 1921), pp. 323 ff. Mixed.

October 1974

CHRIST: THE ONE WHO ACCEPTED GOD COMPLETELY

(Homily for Good Friday)

On this most solemn moment, let us take our place at the foot of the Cross of Christ and let our hearts speak out to Him. As we watch the sure and steady approach of Death, there are many thoughts that crowd our minds concerning this Man. For like the men and women who lived in his time, Jesus Christ has touched each one of us individually. We have experienced in our *own* way the marvel of his power to multiply bread, to cure the sick, to enliven lifeless limbs, to comfort those in grief, to raise up the fallen, to make whole again the broken and to heal the wounded. How many times after a fervent prayer addressed to the Father through His Son Jesus Christ, have we seen the sudden solution of financial, moral, emotional, spiritual, physical problems?

Look deep into your past experiences and you will admit that God indeed through Jesus Christ has touched your life mightily. Like his early listeners we have admired the beauty of his person and the program of life he proclaimed when he praised and blessed the humble in spirit, the meek and long suffering, the merciful, the peacemakers, the pure of heart, the courageous and stouthearted who are willing to face enmity and hostility from those who would not accept his person and his program in the beatitudes. Jesus Christ has touched us not only in the pleasant and bright things he said and suggested, but also in the painful and darker proposals he invited us to accept: if your eye causes

you to sin, gouge it out; if your hand or your tongue causes you and others scandal, cut if off or pull it out. Better for you to enter life maimed, rather than with full body to burn in hell; no one can put aside his own wife and marry another and not be eternally blamed; if you give, give generously and do not count your good deeds; leave the accounting to God; be thankful always that He has given you the chance to do good to your neighbor; for in the last analysis what you give comes not from you but from the Giver of all good things; be ever ready to leave your home, your intimates, your projects, yourself. Unless you did that you are not ready to meet God any moment; but life demands you should be ready to meet God any moment, for death comes like a thief in the night; you cannot serve both God and money; you cannot compromise with God; when it comes to choosing between the laws of God and the laws of men, you must be willing to choose the first and discard the second.

From our own personal experience, Christ has either rubbed us the right way or the wrong way. We have either accepted him or rejected him. We have reacted to him either in fidelity or in treachery. As we recall the thousand and one ways in which he has touched us, we alternately blush or smile.

But allow me to invite you to focus attention on one point in Christ's life which I think also sums it all up: Jesus Christ was a person who throughout his life learned to accept God more and more fully and completely. His last moment of life was also his fullest acceptance of God. From conception to birth, childhood, boyhood, through adolescence, to young manhood and maturity until his death, there was a growing, progressive acceptance by Jesus Christ of God. There are two aspects of God which Christ and every Christian must learn to accept: that God is both the source of the pleasant things in life as well as the painful ones; that God has a beautiful as well as a harsh, or even ugly face. And in all this, man must accept God. Why? Because in all this, God manifests only *Love.*

The beautiful promises made by the angel to Mary—that she was to become the mother of the Son of the Most High, the Savior and King of eternity—was mixed also with the promise that a sword would pierce her heart, that the son to be born of her was to become the cause of the rise and fall of many in Israel. The beautiful memories of his birth and childhood, his first step, his first lisp and the coming of speech—these were punctuated with the memory of "there's no place in the inn," the massacre of the innocents to save him, the sudden flight into Egypt; even the peaceful pleasant days at Nazareth when the boy Jesus was an apprentice carpenter, then a full laborer and then eventually also the proprietor, even these were mingled with the sad memories of his loss in the temple and the agony of the search, the bluster and uncouthness of the clientele and patron at the shop, and the sad departure of Joseph from this life. Then the break came when he had to leave home to do the work of his father and as a public figure lead the life of a vagabond, then the fast for forty days, the temptations, the growing enmity and hostility of the authorities, the friendship of the rich and the mighty, the truculence of the poor and the sick whom he had made whole and healed, the hungry journeys, the hardheadedness and proneness to quarrel on the part of his trusted friends, the plot to kill him, the treachery of Judas, the denial of Peter, the turning away of the apostles at the approach of the soldiers—the fidelity of John, Magdalene, and Mary. All these signalled to Jesus that in this life, there is commingled the pleasant and the painful, the beautiful and the ugly; that God allows all this to come our way for a purpose: not only to try and test us, or to punish us for our infidelities, or to make us gain merit, but, above all, to make his love shine all the more in our lives!

It is especially in times of pain and darkness that God is shown to be love. For only love can go beyond hate and spite and hostility. The fact that Jesus continued to profess his allegiance, his fidelity, his faith and utter dependence on God despite the pain,

shame and frustrations—what was this but a sign that God *is* love? Only a God who really loves can cause a man to love even when he is being betrayed, or cast aside as a fool, or being physically destroyed.

Even his cry: "My God, why have you forsaken me?" is a cry full of faith and of hope. For he believed that God was always with him, and only his terrible pains had made him think that God was away. Yet it was God who was supporting him in his pain. For it was God who because he loved man so much had sent his Son to the world in order that he might become the ransom for sin.

Jesus Christ is dying on the Cross today so that you and I may learn to live, and, living, learn also how to love!

But there is only one condition: never doubt God's love. Allow him to touch you, not only in laughter but also in pain. And love will always show God's face again.

Good Friday, 1976

Part Two

POLITICO-MORAL

PIECES, NOT THE WHOLE TRUTH

True art is true to life, but not a brute copy of life, reality, or experience. For then there would be very little difference between art and life, between what is artistic and what is not. Art is true to life in the sense that real art is a successful attempt to analyze life—if not the whole, at least a significant segment of it. Moreover, this analysis is not abstract. It is concrete. It employs what Ransom calls the "concrete universal," or the symbol. The symbol is fashioned out of words, sounds, shapes, tints, colors, rhythm, movement, tone and style—organized and rendered whole by a central vein of meaning. Thus—because real art is full-bodied, living—it impinges directly on the full person. It addresses itself immediately to his sensibilities and his feelings even as it appeals at once to his mind and spirit. In the presence of real art, man is never left untouched. He is either attracted or repelled. And no questions are asked. *De gustibus non disputandum.* Never require anyone to explain his likes or dislikes. Yet more. Art that is true deals with contemporary situations and contours of experience and reality. Or, if it traffics with the great commonplaces, art should make their contemporaneity come to surface and be immediately felt.

It is therefore quite legitimate that our modern means of artistic communication, particularly the mass media: newspaper, books, theatre, television and movie should exploit such topics as homosexuality, prostitution, drug addiction, and priests who

leave the active ministry to marry, as well as nuns who leave their order to return to the world and live as lay people again. Such subjects are legitimate, relevant, immediate, they offer great potential for modern presentation.

But if art is true, then its analysis of the problems it raises should be integral. It should, through the magic of the concrete universal, or the symbol, resolve the crises it has created, making it issue out in a deeper and fuller understanding of the conflicts in actual life to which it holds forth a mirror. Otherwise it falls short of true art.

In the film *Pieces of Dreams* which played to capacity crowds here in Cagayan de Oro, the symbol around which the whole story was built is that of Father Greg who gradually loses his grasp of his vocation and active role as a priest, and goes away, even as he asserts openly his deep love for the Church, in order to marry a non-Catholic divorcee, who is critical of the Church.

That he should fall in love and thereby be tempted severely to give up his active priestly ministry is not strange. The way of erotic love, which starts with a mild confusion, on to attraction, curiosity, attachment, and even infatuation between two people romantically linked, as portrayed in this film, rings true, artistically true; because it is well motivated. After the priest had embraced the woman, felt her breast and the warmth of her body pressing against his, given the modern mores of film-making rendered popular by his *bombas*, the director expects no one to deny the principals the liberty of climbing to bed naked and there do their thing. But these are merely pieces of the truth. They do not tell the whole truth about the main symbol. Up to this point, the analysis of art is not yet integral.

The main issue to be resolved is not the priest's falling in love and getting fonder of the girl until they go to bed. The issue is why he leaves the active exercise of his priestly role as a man for the Community, the Church, and, as he leaves protests very strongly his undying love for her, and his desire to serve her. Was

it frustration at the inanity of his pastor? of his drunkenness? Was it disenchantment with the hierarchy and his bishop? But he was sympathetic enough with the priest. Or was it due to the perennial tug between individual liberty and institutional structure—the Church with its train of disagreeable issues like conservatism and sluggishness to change? Or was it because he found celibacy too deadening? He himself agreed it was partly because of the law of celibacy. But only partly. Is this other part to comprise the other motives mentioned above or something else? And why if he loves the Church as She is—i.e. slow to change, conservative in regards to birth control and celibacy for the clergy—did he go ahead and marry a woman who was not a Catholic, a divorcee, and openly opposed to the prevailing doctrines of the Church? These issues are left hanging in the air. For those who embrace celibacy as a way of life, as part of their commitment to their roles as persons ordained for the service of the Church, the community, as well as for Catholics who fully understand what the role of their priests is and the intention of the law of celibacy, the *Pieces of Dreams* does not do full justice. If anything, the film was addressed to Catholics, whether priest or laity, for whom the law of celibacy and hierarchical structure are realities. It should have given them a new understanding of priests who leave their priestly office. There were pieces of truth offered, but not the whole truth. Or was it enough to have compounded the complexity of the problem? Is art true when it merely intensifies chaotic reality, or is it not also necessitated by its integrity to enlighten and clarify? Some youths greeting a Jesuit priest coming out of the movie house remark: "Tsk, tsk, Father, too bad!" Too bad, not so much because a priest gave up his active role (although this may be uppermost in their minds). Too bad, rather, because the analysis for his leaving was not clear.

One got the impression the director did not quite understand the character of his main symbol, or else was not too sure who was the audience for whom he was making the film. Once he

chose his symbol as the priest who left his priestly office, he was committed to justifying himself to those, for whom his symbol has living relevance. And this could be no other than the Catholics the world over: clergy and laity alike. Non-Catholics and those who do not live the discipline of the Roman Church can care no less, one way or the other. Or, did the director want precisely to create the impression that the priest was a confused person? A person in love is confused in a way. But this is another kind of confusion. One is confused when deep down one realizes that the situation in which he is presently inextricably lodged was not altogether without his own making. Confusion is a child of guilt. If this is so, perhaps the director has unwittingly captured a very concrete contour of the experience of priests who leave the ministry: *they are confused.* Though there are some who may be so not because of a sense of guilt. The reader will pardon the writer because he happens to be a priest who still retains (thanks to the light of the Holy Spirit) a clear-eyed understanding of his priestly role. A priest is still human—one who "can sympathize with those who are ignorant or uncertain because he too lives in the limitations of weakness" (Hebrews 5, 2). He can be attracted to the opposite sex, he can fall in love, he could even be untrue to his vows, in a moment of weakness. But he does not have to give up his vocation on that score. He can rise again and become better for the fall. There will always be bad superiors, unsympathetic members of the hierarchy. Life can be full of frustrations, but one need not give up a vocation once freely and wholeheartedly embraced because the going has gone rough. Otherwise, where lies the virtue of fidelity, of allegiance, of constancy? Besides, if other priests continue to live their life, it does not mean that they are just posing. Many there are who live their celibacy to the full. And their priestly role is a daily challenge for greater growth unto the stature of Christ. To my brother priests, I say, do not allow the enemy of the soul to encircle you with his nets that cast clouds of uncertainty and confusion. A

brave and courageous acceptance of our roles as men ordained for the service of others helps to clear away the temptation to give up. The people of God honestly needs clear-eyed, dedicated servants. To our dear Catholic laity, I make this request: help us, priests, to lead a life truly worthy of our appointed task: "to act for men in their relations with God, to offer gifts and sacrifices for sins" (Hebrews 5, 1); in other words, to make present in the midst of men the Sacred and the Holy. Not out of our human strength and power, but God's.

August 1970

ILL PRESSING ON THE NERVE CENTER OF PHILIPPINE SOCIETY

On a summer day, two years ago, I was in a town in eastern Davao with a companion. We were on a collecting trip for the Museum and Archives. We stayed there less than 24 hours. Within these short hours I had an experience which drove home to me the greatest ill afflicting our society today and the need to correct this during the constitutional convention.

We arrived there at noon and headed for the *convento* where we were to be the guests of the parish priest. At six in the evening, as the pastor and I were taking a stroll around the plaza, a boy came from the girls' dormitory, to inform the pastor that the Mandaya woman who had been in labor since six that morning was still unable to deliver herself of the other child. She had given birth to the first of her twins earlier. Since the dorm was within walking distance, the pastor and I went to visit the woman. She was lying on the hard wooden floor, only a thin *banig* beneath her. The midwife was pressing hard on her bloated belly, while people kept milling around, a look of concern on their faces, utterly helpless. She was evidently in great pain. Her husband beside her continued to stroke her hair and shoulder. The husband, I was told, had wanted to bring her across the sea to Mati where she could be attended to in the hospital there. But he made the egregious mistake of first approaching the vice-mayor of the town to help him find a pumpboat. The pumpboats plying the sea to Mati and back were owned by the mayor. And the mayor

and the vice-mayor were not friends. Slighted by this unintentional affront by the husband, the mayor refused to release an emergency pumpboat. The pastor and I went to the mayor's house at about 6:30 p.m. (he was playing mahjong) and pleaded with him to forget the slight and to allow his pumpboat to bring the laboring woman to Mati. He was reluctant at first, but after a while he relented. Assured that he would hurry with his help, the pastor and I returned to the convento.

My companion and I had earlier contracted to take the 12 o'clock midnight pumpboat back to Mati, to catch the early morning bus for Davao City the next day, and we wanted to get some sleep. I thanked God before I closed my eyes that the woman was finally being transported to safety and I breathed a prayer for her. At 11:30 p.m., we awoke and packed our things. As we were leaving the priest's house, I spied a procession following a hammock carried by two persons. On inquiry, I found it was the laboring woman being carried to the shore. The mayor had scheduled her for the midnight trip; despite his promises he had not released emergency transportation. Heavy-hearted we walked towards the seashore. There, where the waters of a river flowed into the wide ocean, our boat lay in anchor. The carriers had already stationed the hammock on top of the roof of the pumpboat and the pilot was about to heave off, when a weak voice was heard begging to be brought back to land. The suffering woman felt she was going to be delivered at last. They brought her to land and lay her on the wet sand. The moon was high and bright, and the wavelets were lapping the strand softly. It was a peaceful night. Moments afterwards, the woman gave birth to a dead issue. Its head had been badly bruised by the handling of the midwife since early morning the day before. The mother was only 17 years old. This was her first birth-giving. What a tragedy that the power to give birth should end in death. Shortly after the placenta was collected, the young mother opened her eyes, took a long last look at her husband, closed them again and died. She wore

a smile on her face under the flashlight. The moon, the waters, the young wife giving birth—all were meant to be life-giving, nurturing. There by the waters of the river and the sea, under the moonray—there was death instead. Why? The muffled groan which the young husband gave as he pressed his face against his wife's closed eyes was ominous. In the past the Mandayas were known to run amuck, to kill the first person they came upon at the death of a dear one. Our Bisayan ancestors observed the same practice. Now, however, these people live under and abide by the law of the land. But the executors of the law, the elected officials of that place, through petty jealousies and vindictiveness failed to render these people the benefits of living by and under the law. Since the husband was not from the *poblacion,* he did not know the alienation between the denizens of city hall. He was beside himself with worry and concern for his dear wife and clutched at the first opportunity for help. He and his wife were penalized for a petty, unintended affront on the local high and mighty. The pains of ordinary mortals do not concern the gods.

This is the greatest ill pressing on the nerve center of our country today: the imbalance in the possession of productive capital and services. Through the dynamics of capitalism and the systematic exploitation by the "haves" of the "have-nots," who comprise the greater bulk of our citizenry, those who control political power also control economic power. Therefore, if one is to get a slice of the economic pie, he must seek political power, or, at least, political protection. But the umbrella of political protection is not too wide, nor is the economic pie large enough for too many. Only a few can huddle under the umbrella, and only a few can partake of the pie. The greater bulk of Filipinos are left out in the rain, hungry and angry.

Through the new constitution, we should see to it that not only the politicians and their protegees gain economic competence. Everyone should have the protection of the law, and should have enough economic means to abide by the law. We

must make the ownership of productive goods and services available to the greater bulk of our people. This is not to turn communistic. Nor even to turn socialistic in the bad sense. This means that the "haves" should be concerned with the plight of the "have-nots" in a more realistic and truly Christian way. They should be willing to cut down on their personal profits by sharing these with those who labor and work, shortening their leisure and their lives. Just wages must be supplemented by some sort of profit-sharing in order that the buying power of the many be improved and thereby make our economy more balanced. This is good economics. This is not communistic. It is Christianity brought down to actual living; down to the business world and the marketplace. We request those "who have" to be Christianly concerned for those "who do not have." To be sympathetic with their cause and their misery.

May 1972

LET US BE CLEAR-EYED

Civilization has never been an unmixed blessing. Even dawn has its darker side. America once had mud on her roads between the Atlantic and Pacific; mud as sinister and sticky as the mud on the roads between Cagayan to Bukidnon and Butuan. The mud has long since gone. And American poets sing of the "waste-land of asphalt and cement" which is the United States of America today.

Lights and the blessings of civilized living were once a luxury to many in Oriental Misamis. Today, people living between Opol and Lugait operate frigidaires and sewing machines. Very soon the same blessings will break upon the homes between Jasaan and Gingoog. These blessings are not unmixed: gambling dens, bawdy houses, juke boxes, raucous music, and noises come with the dispelling of darkness. *Bomba* movies and smut magazines will keep pace with progress. People welcomed the industrialization of Iligan. With industry comes pollution. We have started on the way to saturating our coastlines with noxious fumes and smog. People even now complain that a cement factory at the entrance of Iligan from Cagayan is polluting the flour which a neighboring factory produces. In the future, pollution will spread its black mantle over the hills and the mountains, the gardens and the farmlands, the rivers and the seas; begrudging the blade of green grass to raise its head towards the light, and the tiny mayas to roost in their nests.

Education, the process of progressive formation and information of youth, is still the ambition of many Filipinos. Our literacy rate is second only to Japan's. For the last several decades—since the erecting of the wall separating the Church and the State even in such a vital task for nation-building as educating our youth which should command the joint support and cooperation of the State and the private sectors—we have graduated from our state schools which are in principle godless—clever, cunning, intelligent citizens, capable of landing into eminent positions in government and in business. But, alas, many of them have no moral sense, nor religious and spiritual convictions. In these areas of their human personalities, they have not been adequately formed. Rather, because of their sharpened intelligence, their ambition for prestige and power, their moral and religious sense has been deformed. They would use religion and moral respectability as screens for furthering their ambition. Of late, the cream of our youth, for whom the State spends a vast sum of money to educate, have been gnawing at the very vitals of our Christian and democratic way of life. Their bad example has become the pattern by which all the other schools of the country measure their own restiveness, their activism. Their shout: "Down with democracy and Christianity!" Their pretext: they are things of the past, irrelevant. They brandish before your eyes the works of Marx and Mao. Their plan: to politicalize, to radicalize the people. Which means, in whatever way they can, to bring about a revolutionary situation. They bombard the minds and sensibilities of the masses through radio, TV, newspapers, movies and demonstrations by mouthing half truths, false accusations. They precipitate an incident, taunting, insulting, calling names: "imperialistic," "clerico-fascistic" and others too insulting to reproduce. When a policeman or any of their "enemies" against whom they demonstate loses his cool, wields a club, explodes a gun, or punches anyone, be he one of them or any innocent bystander, they capitalize on that! They document it in picture, blow it up in the

papers and the mass media. Should anyone be killed in the melee—they make a hero of him and enlist the sympathy and indignation of the public.

They are masters of propaganda. By means of ridicule, impertinent questions, ceaseless mouthing of canned analysis of the Philippine situation: economic, social and political and educational, and riding roughly over the sensibilities of people, they strive to inject into the minds of the ignorant and immature doubts about their faith and thereby undermine their religious convictions. And finally, through the deft use of propaganda they incite people to hate, hate, hate! They succeed. Because it is easiest to get people to hate. It is very difficult to get people to love. That is why God even made loving one of his Commandments. Thus we see students hating their teachers, servants their masters, employees their employers, children their elders, and vice versa.

Said one high school boy to his grandma after a recent demonstration, "The trouble with your education, grandma, was that it was colonial." The old lady broke out crying. She had been a former school teacher. In her old age she still washes, cooks, slaves away for that boy so that his parents may work in order to send him to school. Gratitude? That's not in our youth's vocabulary. That's *burgis*, feudalistic! We are treated to confusion, half-truths, calumny, slander, lies. Mind you, the devil is both the father of lies and the archenemy of God who is Love. When Genesis tells us God's prophecy over the serpent and the woman: "I shall put enmity between you and the woman, between her seed and your seed," that prediction of enmity between the children of Satan and the son of the woman was a prediction of the great apostasy of our times: when the hatred of hell is proposed in place of the love of God. To hate is un-Christian, ungodly, devilish! Hate begets hate; violence begets violence. And both are sired by lies and confusion. When men no longer think straight, they hate, they murder! What kind of society do you

think we shall end up with if our youth fall in for the communist propaganda of hate? We shall become a communist state. And that means you and I may no longer think for ourselves, or speak out in protest when falsehood is paraded as truth and egotism and pride are extolled as virtues. We shall be forced to think the way the State orders us to think; to call red white, and what we know in the depths of our hearts to be true and right to be false and wrong. And if they cannot succeed in getting you to obey by soft means, then they will use all the tortures that modern technology has at its command to force you to think and speak against your own conscience. Now, not even God will try to do that. But the devil and his slaves will! For he is a liar from the beginning. Did he not say to Christ: "Behold, I shall give you all the kingdoms of the world, for these belong to me, if falling down you worship me." Satan is the prince of usurpers from the very beginning.

Let us be clear-eyed. Let us see the hand, tail rather, of the enemy of mankind behind this worldwide movement to oppose truth with falsehood, moderation with precipitation, peaceful change with violent revolution, love with hate!

Let us be clear-eyed: let us pity our young sons and daughters. They are being made use of by cunning, clever, conscienceless leaders who capitalize on the idealism and optimism of youth in order to fill them with disgust, suffocate them with bitterness, and poison them with hate. Our hearts must bleed to realize that the young have lost their sense of gratitude for their elders, a delicacy of feeling for good manners, since in their eyes, shines hostility not tenderness. It is alarming to notice this, because it is contrary to our most cherished ways and traditions. It is not Filipino. Parents and elders should do all they can to save their children before it is too late. They should warn them against being dazzled by messianism and show; exhort them to abhor hatred and deceit!

Let us be clear-eyed. The boast of Communism that it will solve our problems—technological, economic, even moral—cannot

be true. Unless man is open to the world of the spirit he cannot be morally good. For goodness is based on freedom. And Communism denies man that God-given gift. We have seen that the works of human culture, civilization itself: good roads, light, industries, education—these are not pure and simple blessings. They carry their own seeds of decay. Only if the heart of man who creates and employs them is attuned to the demands of his Spirit and freedom can the tendency to degenerate be forestalled.

Nor is the economic solution the only thing that makes a nation strong. Man does not live by bread alone, but by the words that fall from the lips of God. These words tell us to seek first to do the command of God to love: to cast away selfishness, to practise social justice, to take our responsibilities seriously, to cultivate self-discipline and to practise kindness, mercy and compassion, to respect the life of every human person. Unless a person obeys God's will he cannot long be well. For man and the things of man are bound to spoil and decay.

There is much to criticize in individual citizens as well as in the government. But no one has the right to play the Pharisee: to think, speak and act as though the one who criticizes did not himself bear the very burden of ill against which he speaks. In the past Satan used the Pharisees and Scribes to crucify the Lord. Nor can we expect less today. But at all cost, let us be clear-eyed! Let us not confuse the ones who work for the loss of our fundamental human freedom for liberators! Like Christ we must pray for those who calumniate and hate the Church and the human freedom she stands for. And let us use all legitimate and Christian means to guard ourselves, the young and the ignorant from the pretenses of self-appointed liberators.

June 1969

REFLECTIONS ON SEPARATION OF CHURCH AND STATE

On Tuesday, December 9, 1975, the *Daily Express* carried the item that clergymen could not qualify for membership in the Sangguniang Bayan. Two supporting reasons were adduced, namely, first it would be unfair to seat one sect since there are many religious sectors in the country; and, second many church members are not receptive to the reforms initiated by the government.

These reasons must have been adduced tongue-in-cheek. For they are quite flimsy. They can be turned around precisely to support the inclusion of clergymen in the SB. If there are many religious groups in the country, does not that very fact demand a representative of these groups if the SB is to be truly representative of the grassroots on the local level? The ecumenical spirit prevailing in the country gives reason to hope that whoever is chosen by the ecumenical churches should represent not his own church alone, but the entire fellowship.

Then, democracy is premised on the freedom of the individual to think independently, see the truth for himself, and express it without hindrance so long as he does it responsibly, that is, within the framework of law and for the good of the community, not for selfish ends.

The government is made up of very fallible men who, despite the best intentions, could be mistaken. Therefore, there is need for the corrective influence of sound, intelligent and responsible criticism. This should be encouraged among our people even in

those who serve the government. Thereby one-sidedness can be avoided, extremes and mistakes corrected; and responsibility ensured. Responsible public servants, and most clergymen can qualify, can play a needed role in the SB—the role of the Socratic gadfly.

But we shall not dwell on these minor reasons. We shall focus our attention on the main ground for the ban: the principle of *separation of church and state.*

Let us remember that this principle is an importation from the United States where it had been invoked to guarantee religious freedom. Historically, and this is said without casting aspersion on anyone, the enemies of the Roman Catholic Church were mainly responsible for writing this clause into our laws. Let us bear in mind, too, that this principle presupposes a well-known truth, aptly expressed by Lord Acton, in his famous "Power tends to corrupt and absolute power tends to corrupt absolutely"; in other words, it admits the facts of human cupidity and lust for power or what St. Augustine calls *cupido dominandi.*

To make either the head of the state or the head of the church the repository of both religious or spiritual and political powers would be to court disaster. So the principle as a safeguard against human greed, ambition and abuse is good.

But this presupposes that there is only one strong authority system for the church in any given land vis-a-vis the one strong head of the state. Now the fact is that in the Philippines there is plurality of religions and churches. And the principle should rather read, "Separation of *churches* and state."

Now there is no one head of the churches in the Philippines, not even one head of the dominant religious group, namely, the Roman Catholic Church. Archbishop Jaime Sin is the metropolitan head only of the Manila archdiocese; he has no jurisdiction over Cagayan de Oro. That is the sole prerogative of Mons. Patrick Cronin under the pope.

Not even Julio Cardinal Rosales of Cebu has any overriding

authority over any part of the Philippines other than the Cebu archdiocese. Nor is the Catholic Church in the Philippines monolithic. It is almost as pluralistic as the various non-Catholic denominations. Except that all Catholics as opposed to non-Catholics do own allegiance and loyalty to the pope, as the visible head of the Roman Catholic Church spread all over the world.

So the pope is the only supreme head of the Catholic Church. And it would be ridiculous to say that the Roman Catholic clergyman in the Philippines should be barred from membership in the SB because there is a separation of Pope Paul II and Pres. Ferdinand E. Marcos.

But let us take the principle to mean not so much the individual heads of the churches and the state, but the institutions themselves. Here again we run into another quicksand trap. The churches and state as institutions are abstract concepts. It is concrete people, or better, persons, who compose them.

In the Philippines, generally speaking, every person (man, woman or otherwise) belongs to some institutionalized church or religion as well as to the Philippine State. For a person was either baptized into any of the churches or religions, or at least verbally affiliated with one of them. Those who aren't are relatively few.

And again, every Filipino is bounden to the state in that he is responsible for voting into offices the persons who compose the state; he supports the institution with his taxes, obeys its just laws, is pledged to maintain the state so long as this does not become oppressive of fundamental human rights, and is responsible to it, even as it is responsible to him.

In the Philippines, then, as well as in any democratic republic the individual is the center where the churches and the state meet. Both institutions are needed for the complete well-being of the person. Separate the two, and you cripple the person, if not physically, surely psychologically, or spiritually. And people with maimed spirits do not belong in the open.

What is needed for a healthy nation is to recognize that every citizen belongs to two worlds: the world served by the state—economics, business, finance, national territorial integrity, hygiene and health, police and defense, infrastructure, roads, lights, water, communication, etc., and the world of the churches, namely, the world of the spirit—justice, courage, temperance, integrity, heroism, love of God and of neighbor, purity, loyalty, honesty, hope of better things to come both in this life and in the next, etc. It is for these values or virtues that any church, Christian or otherwise, exists as witness.

Perhaps the principle should be further corrected so that it reads *not* "Separation of Churches and State" but "*Distinction* of Churches and State." In the human person, the sphere of the body is distinct but not separate from the sphere of the spirit. For separation will mean death to the person. Likewise in the social life of the person, the spheres represented by the churches and by the state as institutions are, as part of the knitty-gritty of life, *merged.* Distinct yes. Separate never.

To sum up, we see that in the Philippines today there is no valid reason for the churches and the state to be separate. Whether we take the churches and the state to mean the individual heads or the institutions, they should not be separate, although indeed, they should be distinct, and not be confused with one another.

The churches should always be identified with their proper sphere of purposes and activities and the state too should have its own identity based on its proper reason for being. But even while remaining distinct, they should work together and complement each other for the good of the individual person who belongs to both worlds.

But what does this distinction of churches and state mean? If we consider the heads of the churches and the state, it should mean that the pope should not be elected President of the Philip-

pines (this is a *constitutional* impossibility because the pope is not a Filipino citizen nor does he reside here); it also means that the President of the Philippines should not be elected Pope (again a *canonical* impossibility because for the president to become pope, he will have to be an ordained priest first and give up his wife and family).

Distinction between the churches and state further means that the archbishop of Manila, or the obispo maximo of the Philippine Independent Church, or the supreme bishop of the Iglesia ni Kristo, or the head of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines should not be elected to the presidency of the Philippines and, vice versa, the President of the Philippines should not be elected to the headship of any or all of these churches.

The reasons are obvious. This will avoid too much power in the hands of one man. Besides, to saddle the archbishop of Manila with the presidency of the Philippines or vice versa will not make for good and efficient government, either for the churches or the country. The archbishop and the president simply could not attend psychically and physically to the affairs both of the archdiocese and of the entire country at the same time.

To concentrate such large powers in the hands of only one man is equivalent also to admitting that only one man can be found capable of running the affairs, political and religious of the country. This is not true. There are many others competent to do the one or the other. But certainly not both.

But if the archbishop of Manila or the obispo maximo of the Philippine Independent Church, or the head of the United Church of Christ in the Philippines were to resign from his official duties as a church official or administrator in order to seek a government position, he should have all the right to do so. For there is no law, human or divine, which forbids him. That he should not attempt to seek office while his hands are full with official ecclesiastical duties is merely a practical expediency. But as a citizen, an ordained priest or minister even if he happens to be

the head of an entire church or diocese, or congregation or parish has as much right as anyone else to become a public servant if he is voted into office by an honest, fair and free suffrage.

His being a religious minister in no way divests him of his rights, civil or political. To divest him of these right would be to render him a second class citizen and for anyone in the state, be he the president, to pronounce that such a Filipino citizen is debarred from any or all offices in the government simply because he is a clergyman on the basis of distinction of churches and state is *discriminatory.*

In this case, the principle will no longer be "Distinction between churches and the state" but, rather, "*Discrimination* against the churches by the state."

If clergymen who are actually saddled with ecclesiastical offices for practical expediency should refrain from opting for any political position in government while retaining their basic constitutional rights, *qua* citizens of the Republic, who then has the right and duty to declare that clergymen should refrain from working towards any public office? Should it be the heads of the churches or the head of the state?

If the churches and the state are distinct and should not be confused, if each institution has its own proper sphere of aims and activities, then it seems proper that the decision to oblige clergymen who are already functioning as administrators in the churches not to run for a public office should come from ecclesiastical heads. Not from the state. For there is question here of a free waiver for weighty consideration by free citizens of a constitutional right.

It seems that for a state official to unilaterally declare that clergymen because of the principle of separation (or distinction) of churches and state are barred from the Sangguniang Bayan is to overstep his official competence.

If there is separation or distinction of churches and state, neither institution has the right to legislate *adversely* against the

members of the one or the other. Let the state decree against public officials seeking another public office. It is well within its rights to do so. But the state has no right to do the same for clergymen. Only the churches may rightfully do so. If at all there is separation, i.e., distinction of (*not* discrimination against) churches and (by) the state.

This becomes clearer when we consider the case of ordained clergymen who have no official administrative roles in the running of the churches. I refer, especially to priests and ministers who are not bishops, parish priests, or heads of religious congregations. These priests and ministers may be assigned to teaching jobs in colleges or universities, or serve as researchers, scholars or writers in social, cultural or religious institutes.

If such priests or ministers have the necessary talent, training, and trustworthiness to qualify for any public office, I do not see why they should not be eligible for government service. The practical expedience which applies to clergymen in official church administration does not apply to them. They are free to use their talents and services for the good of the community. And the community should avail itself of their services.

Their long training in spiritual life, their humanistic and liberal education, their expressive and persuasive powers in thought, in the written and in the spoken word, their moral force, fruit of long discipline and mental culture which has armed them with prudence, courage, fortitude and temperance, their closeness to God and to fellowmen, their respect for human dignity, their desire to see justice and right done to the greater majority of the citizenry, their honesty, integrity, love of truth and peace—all these gifts make them very worthy candidates to assume public office.

If the heads of churches are to debar non-administrative clergymen from public office, it should be for very weighty reasons. It surely cannot be on the grounds of the constitution; these clergymen have all the rights of other citizens of the Repub-

lic. Nor can it be the practical expediency of avoiding double administrative functions. On what ground, then? Mainly on prudential ones. For example, because there are very few priests or clergymen to attend to the spiritual needs of the faithful. And priests and ministers by ordination are bound to give priority to these needs.

Or, again, because the churches cannot come together and agree on a representative; or because a particular priest or minister lacks training in law and the ways of politics, and his leadership will be greatly hampered; or there is danger that this or that clergyman, by temperament is liable to lose his religious or priestly commitment by engaging actively in political life; or by reason of ill-health and so on. These are valid reasons and the heads of churches should take them into consideration where this or that clergyman is to be debarred.

But these prudential reasons should be weighed against public risks to morals and the spiritual well-being of persons in the community. Where there are serious threats to justice and freedom, where vindictivenss is the overriding principle that determines policies, where there is evident lust for power on the part of those who lord it over the city, then a concerned clergyman should not stand off from politics. Even if he lacks the technical skill or is in bad health. He should go into the field and get his hands soiled. After all, in life as well as in politics, one gets to learn the rules by living by them.

A priest's involvement may take two forms: one by running for public office as a candidate. After due consultation and discernment he must lay his reasons pro and con before his ecclesiastical superiors, and, as a good Christian, he must abide by their decision. Two, he could, with the consent of superiors, act as support or guide to laymen who are actually involved in political struggle. I personally admit this to be preferable. For this will enable one to be actively interested in the affairs of the city (and

that is what politics is all about, from the original Greek *politeia* meaning the "affairs of the city" in their varied aspects) while at the same time perform activities one has been trained to do, be it as a schoolman, social worker, researcher or any other. Not to mention the priestly ministries themselves, for which he has been ordained.

In this day and age, if a clergyman is to be relevant at all, he must take an active interest in politics, in the *second form.* This way, his image as a man given to the task of promoting justice and serving others in their struggle for justice and freedom will stand out more clearly.

Besides, his motivations will be seen to be truly civic and spiritual. He will not seek office and its rewards, whether in terms of money or prestige. Yet he can make a tremendous contribution to the affairs of the city by force of his moral and spiritual wisdom guided by grace. In fact, in all human interaction, politics included, it is example that counts. The clergyman interested in politics, who matches his words with his works will help others do likewise. The result: more integrity, honesty, justice, freedom, goodwill for all good-living persons.

But these clergymen must stick to their ideals and principles. For a priest is a man sent not to destroy, but to build. He is a man sent to liberate not only the oppressed but the oppressor as well. And although he must not run away from but face even political conflicts, still he is a man of peace, and must work to reconcile brother with brother.

What can be more desirable to the heart of a priest than to see the citizens of the city live as sons of the same God our Father not only in the churches on Sunday but in their homes as well, in the session hall of the city or the province, in the law-courts, in the banks and investment houses, in the marketplace, the schools, the fields, the factories? For this will result in an atmosphere of justice, peace, understanding, love and freedom. A community where those qualities abound is the most fitting field where the

human person as a citizen of two worlds can grow and mature. And the politicians, the lawyers, the leaders that will arise from such a community will save the clergyman from being actively concerned with politics in the first sense. The priests and ministers can fully spend themselves on the labors for which they have been especially trained.

The clergymen's or priests' involvement in politics either in the first or second sense is therefore temporary. His active involvement is needed only in so far as a new direction must be given to the game. The community through its leaders should so live and act as to make his involvement in politics eventually superfluous. For the temporal order is *primarily* the field of the layman, only secondarily of the priest.

I repeat, most clergymen are not reactionary. They are generally serious-minded people, who judge issues by objectives, that is, real and valid reasons. Vindictiveness is generally low among people who live for the service of neighbor. Selfishness and the desire to build a dynasty are not generally motives behind persons who live following Christ and his concern for others, especially the poor and downtrodden.

Being human and fallible individuals, even clergymen can become corrupt and venal. The history of the church at large as well as in the Philippines has ample proofs of this. But that was when distinctions between the church and the state were not yet made. That was when we were a colonial possession, when the spirit of nationhood and civic consciousness was low. But now that the Philippines is an independent nation and love of country has begun to take root in the hearts of many, a public official who becomes oppressive, tyrannical and selfish, even if he were a religious minister, would have to answer to the sovereign people. The safeguard against *cupido dominandi* (lust for power) is our democratic way of life.

It is submitted, therefore, that the Secretary of the Depart-

ment of Local Governments and Community Development take a second look at the directive against clergymen, and to recognize their lawful constitutional rights. To debar them from the Sangguniang Bayan is equivalent to a class legislation and is discriminatory. It is turning them into second rate citizens.

Clergymen represent the various religious sectors of the country. And this sector is quite significant. The National Census Report of 1970 puts the country's total population at 36,684,486 Filipinos. 99.3% or 36,661.704 of these admitted to a religious affiliation. Only seven-tenths of a percent did not. The representatives of the religious sectors deserve a rightful place in running the affairs of the nation on every level.

December 1975

ALUMNI HOMECOMING—RETURN TO ONE'S ROOTS

Our Boholano brother has many counts in his favor. One of these is his yearly return to Bohol. What is of special notice is not so much the return *for* the town *fiesta* or the family celebration, but the fact that he *returns* at all, at least once a year. And what might seem at first like a quaint custom, to mention which may raise the corners of many a mouth in quiet amusement, is in reality, no smiling matter. Rather, it is deeply human and worthy of high commendation.

Boholano wisdom for long centuries has seen the truth which is as old as man himself. This truth is the need ever so often to return to one's roots, one's origins. Psychologists in more modern terms refer to it as the need for a periodic "return to the womb of the mother." But more primordial than the need to return to the womb of the mother, which in many cases is symbolized by the enfolding walls or roof of the *casa madre* or family home, or by the larger home, that is, the village, the town or the island, is the need to be reborn; to be reunited with the vital sources of energy and of life, operative at the first moments of one's emergence from the womb into the world, a return to one's birthtime, birthspace, birth Ecology.

But presupposed beneath the need to return to the womb and of being reborn is the realization of a still more ancient truth: that man, like the world and everything made out of matter, is subject to the law of decrease, decay, and, finally, death. And, if

man is to delay or forestall the inevitable dawning of death, which will mean the total breakdown of his personality and dignity, he must, periodically, replenish the sources of his vital powers.

These sources are not only material, like the food and drink he takes, or the rhythm of sleep and rest punctuating his waking hours, but also the sources of his psychic and spiritual energies, namely, his sense of security, or belonging, of communion with others, of understanding, friendship and love.

True, these gifts he may receive even far away from home, but these gifts put on a special tone when given in the midst of people one has known and loved for so long, within the circle of the homelot, under the sky whose blue he sighted as a child, with the surrounding trees, rocks, woods, rivers and hills whose sights, sounds, smells and colors he was once so familiar with. All this we mean by the expression one's "native air." And the healing power of this is known to all. Thus, a sick individual is advised to return to his native air.

In the same manner, our alumni (and we are proud to count among them quite a number of real Boholanos) during the annual homecoming, repair to their roots, their place of origin, the womb of their "fostering mother" (that is the root-meaning of *alma mater*), and to their birthplace as Atenean–Xavierians, in order to be re-invigorated, re-vitalized, re-energized, not only by the snacks, meals and drinks, but above all, by the Blood of our Lord in Holy Communion, by hearing the saving word of the Gospel proclaimed during Mass, by riveting again past acquaintances, re-sampling the intimacy of old friends, re-living old experiences, re-kindling old loves and memories of youth and early manhood. As members of one large family reunited, each one will delight in looking over faded photographs and rediscovering the old family traits. One such trait is to be men and women *for* others; to be sent to serve, *not* to be served.

Like our friend from Bohol who makes his yearly trek to his

beloved homeland and then goes away again, the Ateneo-Xavier alumnus, after the homecoming, returns to where he comes from, bringing a renewed vision, possessing a new vigor, ready to engage once again in the struggle for goodness, justice and peace.

He may have come with hurts and misgivings. Hopefully, he goes away healed, his sights set aright, carrying away the spirit of his fostering mother, supported by the love and loyalty of his friends and brothers, full of hope for a better tomorrow.

December 1973

ECUMENISM AND MYSTERY

August 27, 1972, the day before the traditional fiesta of Cagayan de Oro, was a day to remember. It was the first ecumenical celebration ever attempted in this city. Citizens now in their middle age can recall how in the early 1930s strained relations, sometimes even bitter, characterized the life of the various churches here: the Catholic, the Aglipayan and the Protestants. Angry confrontations would occur during most solemn occasions like a *fiesta* or a Good Friday evening procession. The sermons in churches were more often than not polemics against each other. Nationalism was oftentimes the theme; we need a church native to the Philippines serviced by native priests for the native people.

If Christ appeared to us in bodily form when we who professed to follow him behaved thus, we would have merited a well-deserved rebuke. But we seldom think of him when our tempers are high. We know from reading the Gospels how he would remind the apostles not once but many times to be patient with one another, because each of us must carry his own burden.

The beautiful expression of brotherly care and regard on the eve of the fiesta seemed to reverse years of bitterness, suspicion and distance, giving a new direction to the relationship of the churches towards understanding, sympathy, and mutual concern.

The Holy Spirit who is alive in the world today is a spirit of unity and truth. We believe He is behind all the efforts of the various churches to understand, to know and to love one another.

For only He can make hard things soft, the cold warm, and the wayward straight.

Ecumenism does *not* mean *conformity* whether in externals or in internals. Nor does it mean *organizational* oneness. The decentralization of authority and power blocks is a must in all spheres of human society, not only in politics. The various churches should maintain their own autonomy. It is precisely in their autonomy that they are able *freely* to enter into communion with one another. Churches younger than the ancient Catholic Church have evolved their own traditions and heritages. Each has a unique gift to give for the enrichment of total Christian witness. These traditions have been shaped by intense adherence to the Word of God in the Scriptures. If ecumenism must grow, the ancient church must recognize and encourage these new traditions as variants of her vision of the same reality to which the Roman Catholic Church in her true essence should continue to bear witness.

Deep differences in understanding and interpreting the Word of God will remain. But differences should not issue forth in uncritical criticism and uncharitable imputations of motives. Rather each Christian church should try to find out, in a spirit of humility and trust, how the other understands the meaning of common terms like "church," "authority," "sacrament," "redemption," "salvation," "grace," and so on. And patience must characterize this humble quest for mutual understanding. For it is the one God, the one Christ, the one Scriptures, and the one Church which we are all seeking to know and *enter more fully.*

Despite goodwill and openness of mind and heart, we will not fully understand the vision of the other; differences in outlook, in emphases as well as in rites and discipline will always be there. These are not to be attributed merely to different training, background and culture. Ultimately, they must be understood against a very *Christian* and *religious* phenomenon, namely, that God who has spoken to men is still "altogether the Other"; He is a

mystery that cannot be fully fathomed by the human mind. For God alone can fully understand his word. The wonder is that He has given us the Instrument with which to understand Him, although in our groping human way: His own Spirit that speaks to us from *within* us. In trying to understand God's word and our own differences in understanding that word, let us continue to pray for help: for no one knows the Father except the Son and him to whom the Son has revealed the Father; and no one knows the Son except the Father and him to whom the Father has revealed the Son.

August 1972

Part Three

CULTURO-HISTORICAL

DRAMA AND PHILIPPINE STUDIES

The Universality of Drama

There is no people in the world, whether in the past or the present, which is altogether without drama. Anthropologists, ethnologists, art historians and others know this for a fact. The same universality can be claimed also in the case of folk stories and myths. The studies of Carl G. Jung and Paul Ricoeur can shed light on this phenomenon.

Jung believes that the human being only gradually develops into a human personality. This development seems to be closely linked with the expansion of the field of awareness or consciousness. This process of expanding awareness has a purpose: its crowning point is the emergence of the spiritual side of the human psyche; an event which is characterized by a sense of security, freedom from the constraints of passion and instincts, freedom from fear, especially the fear of death and the beyond—in other words, a sense of maturity and liberation.

The process is slow and painful. It is attended by much anxiety, uncertainty, fears. For it is really the person's setting forth from the womb of nature to the light of personality; from the womb of the species to the open arena of freedom. Within the mother's womb, for nine months, the human being is very much dominated by the species. This is necessary, because through the mother's blood, this young member of the species receives

human life. At birth, however, there begins the gradual and painful journey away from the center of unconscious union with nature and the species in order that eventually the full grown human personality, having achieved freedom may come back and freely with all humility accept his fraternal relatedness to nature and the species, thus achieving personal integration.

The process of individuation or integration of personality happens particularly at very strategic periods of one's life: at the passage from childhood to early youth; from youth to adulthood, from adulthood to old age and finally at the advent of death. Fully aware of the significance of these periods for human growth, every tribe surrounds these strategic stages with the so-called "rites of passage"; initiation rites which cut off the person from the immediate past and gradually introduce him, and, finally, incorporate him, into the new life he has entered.

These initiatory rites, in reality, mediate the easy and smooth confrontation of the individual with the risks and conflicts which accompany these transitions from one stage of life to another. These conflicts are occasioned by external and internal factors. The external factors are concrete historical events like entering into a new network of relationships as a result of being captured or sold into slavery or marriage; or the experience of falling in love; or death of loved ones. The internal factors are occasioned by the onslaught of the unconscious and the overpowering influence the archetypes of the unconscious can wield over the entire person. These archetypes can emerge at times of tension and anxiety such as are induced by growth from childhood to adolescence to young adulthood and finally old age. Convictions originally adhered to can be shaken at times such as these; the experience of injustice, betrayal, and evil can be quite unsettling and can cause one's sense of security to be threatened.

Besides the communal rites of initiation which life itself has fashioned over the years to cope with these emergencies, the psyche itself has built-in mechanisms to adequately meet these

critical moments. Psychologists tell us that dreams are one such mechanism. Dreams, even bad ones, have a therapeutic effect. Under the benign influence of dreams, wounds inflicted by external and internal factors on one's consciousness are healed. They are affirmations of the basic rightness and wholeness of human life.

The urge to tell a story whether it be myth, legend, or fable is also a built-in devise within the psyche. Like the dream, the folktale or myth always takes the shape of a narration. It has a beginning, a middle and an end. Although there may be a number of characters involved in the dream or story, the hero is always the person of the dreamer or the storyteller. The narrative always contains an action or *dromenon.* It starts with an initial situation, followed by the rise in dramatic tension triggered by the entrance of villainy, personal or situational. There takes place a mounting tension and conflict as the hero either fights or flees; then the struggle or pursuit, the coming on the scene of the various helpers and donors who assist the hero. Finally the last struggle which ends in victory; and the resolution of the tension and the settling down of the action.

Whether the myth be of the origin of the world of mankind, of a social institution like marriage, or shamanism or the priesthood, of death, or the emergence of an island, the formation of a lake or a forest, there is always some struggle or conflict, a mounting and complication of tension and the ultimate resolution.

The resolution is not always accomplished by the solution of a problem, like the victory of the hero over the villain, or the saving of the princess from the hands of man-eating giant. For in other myths like those of the origin of death or of evil, the resolution comes in the form of insight the hero, the storyteller, and the audience gain: a vision into the basic structure of human life itself, and this leads to the understanding and acceptance of the fact that human existence is bound up with evil, sin, alienation, hatred, sickness, betrayal, death. These facts are not done away

with by the myths. But at least they become understandable. In his understanding of these facts, man is no longer threatened with fears and insecurity.

However, the myth and the story are but the spoken side of ritual. There is infinitely more to dreaming and myth-making than meets the eye. The myths and the stories in the past were never told except at very special occasions, particularly those myths which relate to the origin of the world and the more important institutions of society. The myths were merely the verbal portion of accompanying movement which could have been either danced or merely *acted out.*

But the dancing or the acting out as well as the spoken words of the story are mere symbols of a more primitive and original action believed to have been performed by the gods or ancestors before the beginning of life in this world. The activity of the gods which myth and ritual bring to the present again are believed to have been accomplished in primordial times. It is their belief, besides, that the recitation of the myth on the occasion of the ritual or ceremony actually brings the actors and the spectators back to the times when the gods first made the world, in the same manner that the performance of rite and the recitation of myth make the gods and their presence real *now.* During the rite and the myth-telling the entire cosmos and the community of men and animals and the world are, as it were re-created or renewed by the power of the gods. At least for a brief moment things are set aright; the cleavage between gods and man, earth and heaven, tribe and tribe is patched up. There is harmony and goodwill between man and nature. The actors and the spectators come away renewed and envigorated. Things can begin again and the world and life itself can continue until the next festival or celebration.

Both myth and the ritual action, then, are but symbols of a reality that lies beyond present time but which through symbols can be evoked again and be brought to the present. Its effects are tangible and real. Ritual and myth among primitive peoples are

the sources of their individual and communal lives. This reality symbolized is called "Sacred" or "Holy." It could be considered a person or set of persons or simply a power and reality or being. But, whichever way it is conceived, it is seriously taken, and its effects too are not taken lightly.

The man who still believes in living myths, that is, in the reality that myth and ritual symbolize, eventually gains an insight into life and its problems. He begins to understand that both life and the diminishments of life like sickness, betrayal, injustice, cruelty and death will ultimately find their explanation in the reality behind the ritual and the symbol. This reality is both loving and fearsome, friendly and hostile, good and bad, a father and a judge, alluring and repelling, or in the language of Rudolf Otto, *tremendum et fascinans*. And finally, it is a mystery which cannot be fully fathomed. Man's proper stance before it is not arrogance and pride, but lowly adoration, i.e., the stance of a person who believes, of one who is truly religious.

Such was drama at its most genuine sources. Drama was born of religious worship. But religious worship for the early peoples was vitally connected with life and the increase and sustenance of life. For it is precisely at those momentous rites and ceremonies: at the beginning of the year, the ordination of a priest, the plighting of troth in marriage, the opening of new land for cultivation, the curing of the sick, or at the loss of a loved one in death, that life is once again affirmed and acclaimed. Worship for the early people was equivalent to growth or increase in life. The dramatic presentation and the words of the myth or story that accompany the ritual are calculated to bring to the present again, to *represent* the gods and the powers that not only brought the world and the people to existence but which continue to keep created reality in being.

The Role or Function of Philippine Studies in the furtherance of drama

Anyone who has been to Xavier in the last four years has come to know of the existence of the Department of Philippine Studies, formerly Department of Folklore Studies. Aside from running the Xavier Folklife Museum and Archives and publishing a number of books and monographs, the Department of Philippine Studies sponsors conferences and seminars. The first was held on December 27-30, 1972. It was called the First National Congress of Folklore and Other Scholars. The theme of that Congress was "Folkloristics and National Development." The papers which were presented during that Congress have been published in a rather large volume entitled: *Dialogue for Development.* The second seminar was held in August, 1974, at Searsolin. It was called the Seventh Annual Seminar of Islam in the Philippines.

But there is one other activity which the Department is very much interested in, and which it took the initiative to establish in Xavier. This is the KOTA. The KOTA was started in 1970 when Miss Cecile Guidote and her group were invited to Cagayan to give a seminar in integrated arts to a combined group of Xavier students, faculty and personnel, as well as Barangay 40 members. The aim was to prepare the group for the first Lenten celebration, a street drama, depicting the Passion and Death of Jesus Christ. The name of the presentation (and it has become traditional) was "Pulong ug Kahayag" (Word and Light). For seven years straight the KOTA has been putting on this presentation, except in 1976.

From a group organized originally for a Lenten presentation, KOTA eventually became an XU student organization, with definite constitutions and by-laws, accepted and recognized by the University.

Over its short existence, KOTA has presented a number of plays, including "Ang Pagminahalay ni Vergil ug Cely," "Asa Si

Hudas," "Edipisyo," "Oli Impan," "Cuadradong Paraiso," "Agio," "Datu Bagani Kumbalan," and recently "Ang Mananayaw" and "New Yorker in Tondo."

KOTA's intention is to develop Filipino theater and to use the themes and motifs drawn from our own traditions in order to help give direction to society as well as point out its problems and perhaps offer some solution. The language employed is always the vernacular, whether Filipino or Bisayan.

What can the Department of Philippine Studies offer to KOTA, in its dramatic ambitions?

I think it is primarily in the courses which the Department makes available to students, courses like the "Survey of Philippine Folklore I and II," which give an overview of the treasures of folk traditions from the north through the Bisayan islands down to the south; courses like "Introduction to Folkloristics" or "Introduction to Comparative Religion"; or "The Religio-Philosophic Dimensions of Folklore," or "Animism, Magic and Witchcraft in the Philippines," or courses in local history, in "Philippine and World Prehistory," or "Survey of Philippine Folk Beliefs and Customs," or "Folklore Analysis," and so on. These courses are designed precisely to place at the disposal of students the riches of our own traditional past.

But there are special portions of folk traditions which KOTA members should especially cultivate and "exploit" as very rich mines for themes and motifs for dramatic presentation.

The first group are the myths. For as explained above, myths are rich in dramatic possibilities. Myths are cast in dramatic form as seen in the myths of creation whether Babylonian or Filipino. A creative artist may utilize the dramatic situations in these myths, the struggle or conflict between forces, and develop them into full blown plays. For instance, the struggles between Tiamat and her cohorts on one hand, and Marduk and his followers on the other, were actually played out in Babylonia during the *akitu* festival which took place at the beginning of the year. The fight

between Manaol and Tubluck Laui as reported by Pavon among the early Bisayans could be similarly utilized. The delightful little tale of the earth-divers reported to have been collected from Bohol, with the frog, the mouse and the other animals vying against each other to fetch a piece of dirt from the bottom of the primordial ocean with the Old Toad eventually succeeding under the wise supervision of the Big Turtle could be developed into a real dramatic situation.

To the more romantic type belongs the Pavon story of the encounter between two powerful spirits, Captan, god of the land and sky breezes, and Manguayan, the powerful goddess of the sea breezes. They were credited with the origin of the first man and woman from the bamboo stem. Before the protagonists clasped hands and were united in the act of love, they had a contest of power and strength such as only divine beings could indulge in without harm to either of them. Our own mythological traditions all over the Philippines is rich with such tales of creation and origin which could be materials for the creative minds of young dramatists.

The second mining ground for dramatists are the various rituals practised by our peoples in the past as well as today. First of all, we have the ritual of reconciliation between two or more hostile groups. One such ceremony is the *Tampoda (tampura) ho Balagon* (or *ho Lido,* or *Liro*). *Tampoda* means "peace pact"; *ho Lido* means "of Strife"; *ho Balagon* means "of the Green Vine Branch." This was acted out by the KOTAns in 1973 when they presented the "Agio" play during the fiesta in Cagayan de Oro. In this rite, a hole is dug on the ground, about a foot or two deep, and a foot wide. Into the hole is placed a Koran, a Bible, a durian fruit, before chicken blood is poured over them. Then a length of green *balagon* is put into place, long enough to stretch over the hole, with sufficient give on each end for it to be held. The parties who are to make the peace pact sit on either end of the hole, and hold on to an end of the vine branch. Then the officiat-

ing datu takes his kampilan or kris, and solemnly says to the contracting parties: "Whoever breaks this peace pact, let him be cut off even as I now cut off this balagon." With this, he cuts the vine branch in two. A shout of agreement is made, and merry-making and festivity follow.

Another ceremony especially common among the Bukidnon is the *panangkila.* It is drawn from the *binukid* word *tangkil* "to join." The ritual denotes the merging of different groups of people whose relationship has been strained. The ceremony is described thus: three officiating datus gather around a sacrificial pig and six chickens. Crowding around them are people who either simply look over the ceremony or actively participate in it.

The sacrificial pig is tied on two pieces of wooden poles whose two ends are placed on a log, elevating the animal about two feet from the ground. The chickens are placed on the ground not far from the pig. The pig's head is placed in a southeast direction, but it is tied and laid on its right side. The legs point eastward. On its left side are placed tubers of ginger *(luya),* and just inside the pig, a plate containing a spread of piper leaf *(buyo)* is placed and over this leaf are three slices of betel nut *(bunga).* A rolled piper leaf with lime *(apog)* inside is also on the plate. Pieces of candle may also be placed inside the pig.

The officiating datu *(talamuhat)* begins chanting *(paniyap).* This officially signals the start of the ceremony. Other datus also join in. While chanting, the officiating datus chew ginger and every so often spit on the pig and chickens. The use of ginger is meant to weaken the bad spirits *(talabusaw)* as well as the hatred within the parties who seek spiritual unity. When all the ginger has been spat out, the pig is stabbed with a sharp slender knife a few inches behind its left foreleg and cut through its body, causing its blood to ooze and spurt out. Two of the officiating datus then suck and drink the blood from the pig's wound. This means the sucking out of the evil spirits, and the dispelling of hatred from within the parties. Next the talamuhat or datu raises the

chickens and swings them in a circle in a symbolic gesture, driving away the bad spirits at the same time invoking *(talasigan)* the good spirits *(tumanod)* to come. The betel nut, the piper leaf and lime are for the good spirits to chew. Then the chickens are brought down and two of them are placed on the board and their necks are cut off by blows from a bolo.

The cutting off of the chickens' necks symbolizes the breaking of ties of the two feuding parties from their own respective groups (natives and Ilongo Dumagats for instance), so that they can be spiritually united despite cultural differences. The rest of the chickens are slaughtered by slashing their necks. The talamuhat next steps in the blood and the others follow. Then he symbolically washes his hands in the blood of the chicken and the people again follow suit. The stepping in the blood and the washing of hands in it symbolize the washing of hatred and the driving away of evil spirits from the hearts of all concerned, as well as the forgetting of animosity so that mutual respect, cooperation, understanding and unity will prevail among them. The sacrificial animals are then dressed and cooked in boiling water.

The last part of the ceremony consists of the offering of the food *(bayang)* to the good spirits by the talamuhat. The ceremony ends with the participants eating the sacrificial meat, and the chewing of the betel nut quid.

With the panangkila, the feuding groups are reconciled and are tacitly obliged to cooperate, respect, and understand each other since they have been spiritually united.[1]

Here is Pigafetta's account of how the early Bisayans consecrated a pig before slaughtering it for their feast.

"They first sound these large gongs. Then three large dishes are brought in; two with roses and with cakes of rice and millet, baked and wrapped in leaves *(bibingka?)*, and roast fish; the other with cloth of Cambaia is spread on the ground. Then two very old women come, each of whom has a bamboo trumpet in her hand. When they have stepped upon the cloth they bow towards the

sun. They then wrap the cloth about themselves. One of them puts a kerchief with two horns on her forehead, and takes another kerchief in her hands and dancing and blowing upon her trumpet, she thus calls out to the sun. The other takes one of the banners and dances and blows her trumpet. They dance and call out thus, saying many things between themselves to the sun. She with the kerchief takes the other banner, and lets the kerchief drop, and both blowing on their trumpets for a long time, dance about the bound hog. The woman with the horns always speaks to the sun, and the other answers her. A cup of wine is presented to the woman with the horns, while she dances and repeats certain words which the other answers; at the same time she makes a pretense of drinking the wine four or five times, before sprinkling it upon the heart of the hog. Then she begins to dance again. A lance is given to her. She shakes it violently, mutters certain words as both women continue to dance; and she makes a motion four or five times of thrusting the lance through the heart of the pig; then finally with a sudden and quick blow she thrusts it through from one side to the other. The wound is quickly stopped with grass. The one who has killed it, takes into her mouth a lighted torch, which has been lighted throughout the ceremony, and thus puts it out. The other woman dipping the end of her trumpet in the blood of the pig, goes around marking with blood with her fingers first the foreheads of their husbands, and then the others . . . Then they take off their ceremonial garments and go to eat the contents of their dishes, and they invite only the women to eat. The hair is removed from the hog by means of fire. Thus only women consecrate the flesh of their swine, and they do not eat it unless it is killed this way."[2]

These three instances of ritual or ceremony drawn from our people in the past and in the present are ample proofs of the richness of materials at the disposal of the KOTAns or any other dramatic group interested in employing them for dramatic creation. The myths and stories, too, as pointed out above are

themselves filled with possibilities, if there are enough talents to exploit them creatively. What is needed is the spirit of research and interest in the traditions of our peoples. At Xavier University we have the singular opportunity of having a Center dedicated to the collection, preservation and archiving of all categories of folk traditions. It is my hope that many more students will make use of our materials precisely for the development of Filipino theater and the indigenization or the Filipinization of our dramatic productions. In this way we shall contribute to the building up of the national soul, both within our individual selves as well as in the community.

Notes

[1]Inocente Natividad Javier, "Panangkila: A Bukidnon Ritual," *Asian & Pacific Quarterly of Cultural and Social Affairs,* vol. VII, *No. 2 (Autumn, 1976), pp. 22-24.*

[2]F. Demetrio, S.J. "Philippine Shamanism and Southeast Asian Parallels," *Asian Studies* vol. XI, No. 2 (August 1973), p. 139.

1978

FOLKLORISTICS AND SELF-UNDERSTANDING

Folkloristics is concerned with the study of various forms of folk traditions—the legend, the folktale, the fable, riddles, proverbs, and the myth. This essay is limited to discussing myths as a source of understanding our move towards national development. There is no people in the world who does not have myths. Myths generally are told in the form of a story and the nature of story is generally that of drama. It thrives on conflict.

Now this fact has very important connotation. I'm sure all of us have had dreams. And is it not true that when we dream, our dream tells a story? Our dreams are usually in the narrative form. But what happens in a dream? Well, Jung and Freud tell us that actually in a dream, there are impulses: psychic and biological—which in themselves seem to be meaningless, and yet, somehow, or other, the human mind or the human psyche by an innate creativity produces something so that the next day we can tell our friends, "This is the dream that I had last night."

It seems that mythtelling and storytelling partake of the same quality as dreams. There is no people without myths even as there are no people who do not dream. This externalization of some interior experience is very important because a myth, once it is externalized becomes common property. It is no longer the possession of one man. It is meant for others and for the community. What is it that characterizes the myth? I have already mentioned drama which is built out of conflict and struggle. And

that is why all our myths, particularly the myths that tell of the creation, are always environed in struggle.

What seems to be behind all this is the fact that man is a being or creature who is born enveloped in fear. All of us have our own deeply felt fears both as individuals and as members of society. It seems that myth as a form arose precisely in order to contain fears coming from impulses that are unnamed and little understood. They are cast in a style that is not ordinary, in a style all its own. Myths are in themselves potential works of art because an artist, too, when he begins to paint a picture, write a poem, sculpt a figure, is drawing from his interior self, his dreams, ambitions, desires and, above all, his fears.

The deeper a personality is, and the more rich interiorly, the greater will be the thing that is produced. Once a work has been produced, that work begins to achieve or acquire an existence, as it were, that is its own, and through this aesthetic achievement: whether it be a myth, a poem, or a piece of architecture, all those who see it, and above all, examine it, will begin to share in the inner experience of the artist. And once those experiences are brought out and given artistic form, the community is instructed in the concerns proper to it.

The next point to consider is this, in mythmaking the storyteller is very important. This brings us to the consideration of the role of the storytellers or mythtellers, particularly in a community. The shamans in a community are the repositories of the various myths and traditions of the people. And the shamans are such that they have seen the meaning of what they tell because they are persons with deep feelings, are generally intelligent, sensitive, and widely experienced. When they tell a myth, generally it is not in a condition or environment where the attention of the audience is scattered. For a shaman tells a myth usually within the context of a performance—a dramatic performance. And when he undergoes certain motions, he actually takes on the role of the character that he impersonates. Sometimes in taking these

roles a shaman goes to such extent that when he is telling about the death of a hero, his identification with the role becomes so intense that he himself sometimes dies.

The point I want to bring out is this: the shaman or any mythteller does not tell his tale in an ordinary situation. It is always within the context of performance. As a result, the minds of the audience become attuned and they are able to participate and empathize, to experience what is being told. Thus the performance of a shaman or any mythteller is always an instructive experience. People are educated by listening to a tale or a myth that a shaman tells. One of the tales that a shaman particularly shares with us tells about the origin of the world, the beginning and the destinies of the group, as well as the land of the dead since one of man's foremost fears is of death. The shaman, by telling the myth of the land of the dead, is really rehearsing for his audience what he has already experienced; he opens up for them a map of this unknown land, thereby forewarning the audience.

In relation to this, let me relate a story of the land of the dead as found among the Sulud. It must have been shamanic experience which informed the Sulods that dying is like passing through a narrow door. Some distance away from the door, which is also the deathbed is an anthill. One goes around this anthill and finds himself near the bank of the stream called *Muruburo.* Along the bank of this river live the *Manghikawon* or evil spirits which eat the new arrival unless they have been propitiated by the living before the time the dead Sulod journeys to the land of the dead. It was the shaman who informed the Sulods that in Muruburo the soul puts aside its funeral garments and takes a bath in order to wash away all mountain smells and to remove the odor of the *kamayan,* the ginger and other herbs that were used to wash the corpse before dressing it and depositing it in the coffin. In order that the soul of the dead man may be welcomed upon its arrival in the land of the dead, it must be well attired and provided with

precious things; the soul or *omalagar* proceeds in its journey to *Lin-awen,* the deep lake whose dark and deep water flows and bubbles into the *panibunayan* or navel.

On the banks of that lake lives *Banglae,* a huge man with a hairy body. His shoulders are broad measuring seven *dangaw* and it is he who brings the souls to the other side. However, before bringing them across the lake, Banglae questions the soul as to how many husbands or wives he had while he was living. The male omalagar is castigated for having only one wife. Some souls are not carried on the giant's shoulder but are made to swing clinging to the hair of his thigh. The verdict of the female omalagar is based on the reverse of the male. The soul cannot tell a lie because the *tuma* or the body louse is called upon by Banglae to testify for its host. Having crossed Lin-awen the soul follows a trail which leads to another stream, the *Imbaraw-en,* over which is a bridge made of timber and which is guarded by *Balugo.*

Here another cross-examination takes place with the body louse testifying for or against the host. After he passes this test, the dead relatives of the newly arrived welcome him. He is now inside the land of *Madayaas* but not yet in the final resting place. At the entrance of Madayaas is a cockpit. The newcomer is made to bet on one of the spurred roosters. From there the soul goes to the resthouse, called *Haramyanga.* It remains there until rituals intended to strengthen the spiritual body and ransom it from the power of Balugo have been performed by the living relatives. If they fail to perform these rituals, the soul is transferred to another place where *Kulabao,* the guardian, transforms it into an *animispis* (a small insect). However, if the needed rites are performed, the soul is brought to the center of a performance.

Now these tales of the land of the dead give the community a sense of security. They know what it is to die; and what happens when one dies. This is very important for national development in that if you have a people who are always fearful you cannot develop them in any way. So this is one case of myth being

told precisely to bring about the psychological condition that is necessary for development.

Another serious matter most people want to understand is the problem of evil. The Bukidnon has a very interesting myth. The Creator *Hari ta Magbabaya* lived in the *ikapito nga langit* (seventh heaven). One day, he came down to earth and molded the people on earth. He wanted them to be possessed of a sturdy body covering. So before breathing the gift of life into them he went back to the sky in order to secure some hard material for their skin.

While he was away, his own brother, *Mangilala* "the tempter," came up to the earth from the seventh tier of the underworld where he lived, and was pleased to note his brother's absence. He thought: "Should my brother finish what he has begun, he would become more powerful than I." He breathed life into the forms of clay so that they began to live as human beings. When Magbabaya returned, he found his creatures already alive and their body covering still very frail. He knew it was his own brother who had spoiled his work. Instead of destroying the people, he took pity on them and allowed them to exist as they were, thinly covered by their skins. However, he saved the extremities of their hands and feet by providing them with the covering he had brought down from heaven. This became the nails on their fingers and their toes. But afterwards whenever people are tempted to do what is evil, the Bukidnon say that this is due to the fact that their life was breathed upon them by the evil one.

This little myth tries to understand the problem of the human situation, part of which is that people are prone to do evil. This is so because man's life was breathed upon him not by the good creator but by the bad creator. But life is a gift and as such it must be respected by the good creator. He would not destroy the living being because he still values life. However, to make them strong against the attacks of the evil one, he provided hard extremities to their bodies—their fingers and toes. The extremes of the hands and feet correspond to the extremes of the interior

of man. In mythic writing and talking there is always this correspondence. The extremes outside are answered by the extremes inside. If the external extremes of man are fitted with something hard which can protect man's body from attacks, so also the extremes of his interior the core of this *psyche,* his true self, are covered with something hard.

In other words, what the myth is trying to tell us is that, although it is true that evil is allowed and can do harm to man, nevertheless, man has within him the capacity and the power to resist.

There is a hard core in him symbolized by the strong covering given by Magbabaya for the extremities of his hands and feet. Now, I said this myth is told in the context again of a performance. This could be told when, for instance, there is a *husay* following a misunderstanding between two parties. Perhaps after a successful husay a myth like this can be told in order that the offender and the offended would begin to understand their human situation.

We are all caught in this mysterious life wherein the good and evil are mixed together. I would like to recount another myth which has a very deep philosophical implication. This is a myth from the *Bataks* in Borneo and Sumatra. It goes this way:

There once lived a great prince beloved by all on account of his power and wealth. But he had no children. So one day he prayed to God, "O, Grandfather Mula Djadji, you have given my brother seven children; give me at least one!" Shortly after, his wife became pregnant and in due time a son was born to her. But when this child came into the world it was found to be half a human being; it had but one eye, one ear, one foot, one arm. For this reason it was called "John the onesided."

As the child grew up it naturally waxed more indignant at its hideous appearance and finally it decided to go to Mula Djadji and complain directly against the fate that had been alloted to

him. After many difficulties the boy arrived in the presence of God and to Him he complained directly, "Grandfather, why did you make me so completely different in appearance from all other people? Give me a shape at least like theirs." Then God answered him, "You must not find fault with me in this matter. I would like to bestow upon all people a nice shape, for that would redound to my credit. But is it my fault if a man's *tondi* refuses to accept the lot I had predestined for him? To prove to you that I am telling the truth, follow me to the sixth heaven and there you will be able to convince yourself that you have no cause for complaint against me." Thereupon, God showed the boy the moulds of his father's and mother's fate and explained to him how beautiful had been the lot that he had destined for him too.

"When you were born I showed you the fate that I had arranged for you, that would be yours on earth, but your tondi refused it saying it was too heavy for you. I told your tondi thereupon to select something that would fit you but it insisted that everything I showed it was unsuitable and too heavy. Then it told me to split the mould in two. "Good, I will do that for you." And it was done. You can see for yourself what the original mould was like. You see that it is the mould of a complete man. When I split it, of course, only a half man developed, for only that which a man selects for himself comes to fruition."

God, however, had pity on the poor half-man and spoke to him. "Good, I will cancel your fate and again give you a chance to select your destiny." The cripple immediately set himself to the task of selection. He weighed all the moulds. But everything was too heavy. Finally God asked him which he had chosen. He replied: "I would have tried them all but they are too heavy. O let me not die! Give me my old mould back again for only that one can I carry!" "Well and good," said God, "but do not complain again. I allow all people to choose the good, but if they refuse, then they must suffer the consequences."

These two myths explain deformities that come from nature as the very choices that man himself made before the creator gave him his body. These choices were his. What they are trying to tell us is that man's destiny is not altogether God's own work. Man has a hand in shaping what he becomes. These ideas are essential in the understanding of our own identity as well as for the understanding of the process of development. Because it is important that in finding our identity we get a hold of our inner self. And we get hold of our inner self precisely through the traditions that have come down to us from time immemorial.

These give us a sense of what we are. And unless we have that, we cannot begin to grow.

What happened when Christianity came to the Philippines? Many of these original myths were lost. Our people, however, were given a new myth, as mediated to us through the scriptures of the Hebrews, and thus soon our ancestors learned the story of Adam and Eve. Through them we also learned the first death: when Abel was slain by his brother. We learned, too, of the origin of the world and the dispersal of races in the story of the tower of Babel. The people who understand their Christian heritage as well as their native, more primitive heritage, are in a better position to develop because they can make the necessary connections and corrections of both. Therein lies the need to instruct the community mythologically.

In other words, there is a need to link these traditions from the past alongside with traditions from Christianity or Islam, as the call may be, to appropriate them to ourselves so that we will understand them and by understanding them become strengthened as individuals and as a people.

October 1975

OUR BAG OF GOLD IS YOURS
(Or *Lest We Forget Our Roots*)

I have long cherished the hope to tell the story of the work we are trying to do in Xavier University where I teach. I feel I owe it to you. Unless you know that you possess a bag of gold, that bag is as good as non-existent. And there's a bag of gold in Cagayan de Oro. The bag is not buried in the soil but in the traditions of our people. Although we have begun to dig this up, much remains to be excavated. It is my hope that you will bear the burden with us and help us bring the gold out for you, for us, and the entire Philippines to share. In this we shall all be humanly enriched. This enrichment will be found in our growth and a deeper understanding of ourselves as Filipinos and as Southeast Asians.

For modern Filipinos, the study of folklore and mythology has an important role in our development. Familiarity with our traditions, dreams and rituals will save our consciousness from being imprisoned in the objective, conceptual, rationalistic and scientific. It is our folklore and myths that keep us in touch with the sources of humanity which lie in the depths of our psyche. This keeping in touch with the depths of the psyche will in turn help us retain the human quality of life even in our highly technologized world.

This paper will then dwell on these topics: 1) Consciousness—its origins and development; 2) The Implications of Consciousness for self knowledge; 3) The Dangers of Consciousness—for forget-

fulness of roots and subsequent dehumanization; 4) The Role of Folklore and Myths in Reminding us of our Roots; and 5) How Xavier University proposes to further aid in Remembering our Roots.

The March 14, 1977 issue of *TIME* Magazine carried a review article entitled "The Lost Voices of the Gods" of a book authored by Julian Jaynes and called *The Origin of Consciousness in the Breakdown of the Bicameral Mind.* An interesting book, it takes a definite position on the very hazy history of the origin of consciousness. Jaynes believes that the first faint stirrings of consciousness began with the discovery of language or speech some 100,000 years B.C. It was not until 10,000 B.C. that our species was estimated to have evolved to the stage where it had a bicameral mind. This means that over against the left side of the brain which controlled language, there developed as it were the right side which perceived the "inner voices" which were eventually attributed to gods and ancestors or heroes. The brain of our species then had two chambers: one for language, the other for perceiving the inner audible commands of the gods. Thus the name bicameral, or two chambered.

At this particular stage of human development, our ancestors had the power of communicating among themselves through language and speech, as well as of communicating with the divine and superhuman by means of the inner voices. This stage lasted for 90,000 years, during which man was both a speaking and an innerly guided animal. This guidance, however, was more the result of habit and instincts rather than of conscious and freely made decisions. Men did not yet have individual personal minds or wills. Nor were they in any true way responsible for their actions. It was nature, or the species, or the gods who chose for him.[1] Man then did not yet lead a genuinely moral life. There was no law court for lawyers were not needed, nor were there prison-houses, retreat house, universities, churches, nor editorial houses either.

All over the world, this particular stage in the rise of man has been symbolized by the myth of the "golden age." It was an age of marvel; an age of innocence and contentment. Through nonerring instincts and his inner voices, man was perfectly in tune with nature and the universe. Everything was "very good." There was abundant food, ever kindly climate, peaceful surroundings, and a seemingly deathless existence. The elements—fire, water, earth, air, sky, sun, moon, stars, rocks, trees, streams and seas—were all brotherly to man. Even the animals were not hostile, since man regarded them as brothers nurtured by the same mother, and protected by the same father. The myths of the nearness of the earth and the sky among the early Filipinos,[2] or of their being locked in close embrace, as found among some Filipino tribes as well as among the Greeks relay an identical message.

But the wheels of evolution continued to grind. The human brain and organism continued to develop until finally the bicameral brain of man was shattered by the shaft of consciousness. In religious language this event is celebrated in the myth of the "fall."

Jaynes tells us that the irruption of consciousness upon our species was brought about by what he calls "social chaos." Towards the first millenium or 1,000 B.C., there came about vast migrations of people like the famous *Volkerwanderung* of the Indo-Europeans who from their *Urheimat* or original home in the Khirghiz Steppes in Central Asia, spread over a long and vast continuum, stretching from the top of Europe on the North Sea southward and eastward across the face of Europe down to the belly of the Indian subcontinent along the Bay of Bengal.[3] A parallel case could be cited among the Proto-Malays who fanned out from their original *Havaiki* somewhere in South China eastward toward the sea, passing through Taiwan and the Philippines, and out again into the wide Pacific, founding new homes in the Micronesian and Polynesian islands as far as Hawaii.[4]

Other instances which produced social chaos which triggered the emergence of consciousness included: natural catastrophes such as earthquakes which brought about the disappearance of ancient civilizations like the fabled Atlantis; volcanic eruptions of such magnitude as to cause large chunks of land to sink and others to surface such as in the story of Krakatoa; the drying up of certain portions of the globe like that of North Africa and the great deserts. These physical events, tragic and traumatic, forced man out of the limbo of unconsciousness and catapulted him into the bright open space of consciousness. He was constrained to fall back on himself, and in so doing, discovered his inner self and potential resources. It was a terrifying and terrific awakening because it meant so much for further human development.

Social chaos caused men to think in a newer and deeper way than before. For the first time, man discovered the distinction between the inner and outer worlds; that in reality he is made up of an outer, visible element, his body, which enshrines an inner, invisible core. The core had a center which was quite distinct and independent of the body.[5] This realization paved the way for the institution of shamanism which is premised on a real distinction between the soul and the body. The shaman in his seances must leave his body behind, and, in his trance, visit in spirit the heavens or the underworld or the farthest reaches of the universe in search of knowledge and verities useful to the community, or in search of the lost souls of sick persons, or in order to conduct the souls of the dead to the land of the dead.[6] At this juncture, too, man realized that through his inner core—the self—he could reach back to the past in memory, hindsight and reflection and project himself into the future in prophecy, foresight (clairvoyance) and planning.[7]

But more importantly as modern philosophy has demonstrated, the process of learning includes a well orchestrated system of paying attention, having a hunch, questioning, doubting, resolving one's doubt through research and data gathering: weigh-

ing of evidence, comparing and eventually making a judgment on the basis of evidence; and, through judgment, arriving at the heart of the real or the truth; that the real and the true are quite independent of one's own or one's neighbor's *personal* opinion or preference. For the truth is beyond the knower and the known. It transcends them both.[8] Why? Because in a deliberate and responsibly made judgment, based on solid evidence, man touches Being itself. Being is the ground of the very existence of both the one who knows and the object that he knows. In the judgment then, man awakens to the reality of Being, or of *that which IS.*[9]

Through the act of making a judgment by which man enters the realm of Being, the knower realized for the first time that he was also subject, that is, that he was the one *who* knows and understands as opposed to others who do not know nor understand. For the first time man realized that as Subject who knows something *other* than himself, he was also capable of knowing *himself* by the act of reflection or self-knowledge. Thus he was alerted to his own subjectivity; and by this very fact, also to the subjectivity of others; that is, that even as he was a world in himself, a mysterious something, so also other human beings were worlds unto themselves, mysterious beings, unfathomable by others, not even by themselves, open only to Absolute Being, that is, God. By the gift of self-knowledge, man outdistanced the beasts of the fields. These lower forms of sentient life could have been conscious of others outside themselves, but they could not be conscious of themselves the way man was. This is man's unique privilege. Through it he possesses self-presence as well as self-possession, and the freedom also of self-giving in the act of loving his neighbor and his God.[10]

Thus began the great adventure of man in search of meaning in literature, art, religion, psychology, philosophy, theology, in subjectivity and intersubjectivity. Thus through consciousness, man now no longer only knows the world, but he knows that he knows the world and himself.

This gain in self-knowledge can, however, be spoiled by man's over-attention to the content of his knowledge, that is, his ideas and concepts. He can so tailor his interior life that he pays attention only to that which can be objectified and verified by both logic and reason.[11] Thus he is bound to forget the self which knows, and the process by which the self knows, since these cannot be truly objectified, nor demonstrated by the ways of logic and science. Thus man is liable to become impatient with the dimension of his personality which cannot be clearly objectified.[12] Thereby he becomes hardened and insensitive to the signs and signals coming from the deepest recesses of his self.[13] A captive to categories and conventions in thought, in word and behavior, he becomes an ethnocentric, inflexible person; wooden and ultra conservative, incapable of creative innovations, devoid of imagination. Since thoughts and concepts can become falsified and inadequate with the changing scene of culture and human development, this person cannot change. For only the self, his vital link with Being and its deeper resonances, can correct such falsities and inadequacies. But such a one is deaf and dumb to the messages of the self. For unless consciousness is constantly brought back to the sources of Being in the unconscious, and unless consciousness forever acknowledges its links with nature, with instincts, with feelings, with the subterranean world of myths and dreams, consciousness in the form of reason, logic and science, can become so self-willed and taken up with its own surface self, that it forgets the deeper and truer self. It commits the sin of *hubris* or pride. And hubris, as the Greek tragedians fully realized, leads to *ate* or the darkening of intelligence and a reversal of values, which in turn, by the stern law of necessity, brings on *tisis* or retribution.[14] The biblical injunction never to raise oneself higher than what is due seems to be psychologically sound. It is not to be wondered at, then, that a civilization like ours which sets logic, rationality and scientific method on the pedestal has spawned so many mental and psychological misfits.

And there seems to be no end to this as yet.

Like anything made by man since he took over the task of developing himself with the advent of self-consciousness personal integration is subject to baneful influences that can bring this noble achievement to ruin unless self consciousness is kept in check. An overvaluation of consciousness will make man blind to the archetypes of the personal and collective unconscious; a too logical and juridical mind makes one insensitive to the finer nuances of the mysterious and the sense of proportion; and a too rational approach to life and its problems can make a person too rational to be human. Thus the very goal of human development is defeated. And the very stages of human development instead of making him more human render him dehumanized.[15]

There are a number of folktales in Southeast Asia which castigate the man who plans. There is the story of a poor man who had himself hired out by a rich man to harvest his coconuts. He was entitled to one coconut for every ten harvested. He climbed a tree and having reached more than halfway up the tree, he began to reckon how he would get twenty coconuts for the two hundred he would harvest. Then he would sell the nuts, buy himself a kid of a goat; when the goat produced other kids, he would sell the milk and the kids and get more capital for business, and so on, until he became a very rich man. Finally, he would marry the princess. And he would be playing chess with his royal guests; and soon after the princess would call for him to join her in their bower. He would not be budged from his friends. After so many futile attempts to get him, the princess herself in person would come, and after so many cajoling words wasted, the princess would poke him on the side. He had been gesturing all along while telling the story to himself. When he told how the princess would poke him on the side and how he would dodge caressingly, he let go of his hands from the tree and down he fell.[16]

Our own little story: "Maria Went to Town" delivers the same

theme. She went to sell five dozen eggs; she counted in her mind the money she would get, the things that she would buy, then walked like a coquette. But she forgot the tray she carried on her head and when a naughty dog behind barked at the little maid, down fell the tray. All the eggs she kept in store broke, of course, and sadly she went home, wiser than before.[17]

It is wise not to count your coconuts before they are harvested, or your eggs before they are sold. The folklore seems to tell us that the use of the mind is good, but it must be controlled. Left unchecked, it can cause disaster.

From the foregoing discussion, it is sufficiently clear that the acquisition of consciousness by man was a long and tedious process; that the interval between the first three stages was quite extensive: from 100,000 B.C. to 10,000 B.C. are 90,000 years; again, from 10,000 B.C. to 1,000 B.C. are 9,000 years. However, after the third stage or the emergence of consciousness and the breakup of the bicameral brain, the intervals have been gradually diminishing. From the call of Abraham (1,800 B.C.) to the leadership of Moses (1,300 B.C.) there were only 500 years interval: there were only 300 years between Moses and Solomon: only 500 years between Solomon and the peak of Greek culture in the time of Socrates and Plato; as well as from Solomon to the rise of prophetism in Israel, the great king-builders in Egypt, and the architects of Chinese wisdom, Confucius and Lao-tse. Another 500 years elapsed before Jesus Christ was born; before him Buddha had achieved enlightenment; Muhammad came some 500 years after Jesus Christ; the Middle Ages, begun in the fourth century, reached its heights in the ninth and thirteenth centuries; two hundred years afterwards was the rediscovery of the Greco-Roman culture. This was followed by the rise of city states in Europe; the breakup of Christendom and the religious wars; the opening up of the New World and the Far East to European explorers and missionaries; then came in rapid succession the

invention of the printing press; the discovery of the steamboat, the wireless, the radio, television, space travel and the laser light, and all the wonders of modern technology. The twentieth century as we all know is characterized by rapid changes; fads and fashions are taken up and discarded in very short order. Just take, for instance, the Death of God theology, the hippie movement and the thousand and one objects that for a while held the attention of the peoples over a great portion of the world and then suddenly are no longer in vogue. Change has become the byword of the post modern world. *Future Shock* brings home this fact in sheer clarity; as do movies like "Death Race 2000," the "Street Fighter" and all the futuristic products of Hollywood and the movie industry. These movies, as a matter of fact, are leading the way to a re-examination of our penchant for rationality, for logic and for what is predictable. These movies underscore that man cannot be programmed altogether. That somehow or other you cannot drown the "voices of gods," nor the voice of conscience. Brutality, the principle of profit at all cost, of control of people by the machine, of sexual license—these somehow or other are an affront on the deepest dimensions of the human psyche. And modern man in these movie productions somehow says "nay" to these assaults on his most essential freedom.

What then is required of modern man? The restoration of the equilibrium in the human psyche. This equilibrium, however, must be premised on the realization that there are two sides of the psyche: the logical and the mythical sides. That both are vitally important to man: that both should be developed and kept in even balance if man is to remain truly human. We must restore the balance between reason, logic and science on the one hand, and the mythic, the mystic and the artistic on the other. One should never be sacrificed for the other. To do so would be to render the psyche lopsided, with devastating effects.

In Cagayan de Oro we are seriously decided on working for

human development through the Museo de Oro Foundation, Inc., and the projects it plans to initiate and pursue.

Human development must first start with man understanding himself as an individual and as a member of a community. This growth in understanding is really growth in self-consciousness and subjectivity. Central to this growth is the realization that to be fully human one must live not by bread alone, nor by logic, reason, or science alone, but also by the more intangible realities of his myths, traditions, dreams, ideals, memory, art and religion, and the symbols which mediate to man the transcendental reality or Being which religion and art since the emergence of the bicameral brain and of self-consciousness have been at pains to express. For in truth, only if consciousness and the human spirit are constantly nourished by contact with that Reality will it reach full development.

Very few of our people take these realities seriously. We have been too badly infected with the virus of scientism, or the overvaluation of the scientific method, so that no other approach to reality is considered valid except the scientific way.[18] The reality which the myths and the folktales tell about is considered to be interesting remnants of the ancient past; or the myths and the tales are looked upon merely as pastimes or recreation. Yet the modern understanding of these realities by the scientific study of folklore and mythology and religion convinces us that these are more than just means of recreation and escape; nor are they simply interesting relics of the past. They deliver a truth to modern man: the truth of life and experience; the truth of conscience; the truth of the inner voices of the gods; a truth more basic than the truth of recorded facts we call history, more basic than logic, more basic than reason and science.[19] Modern man must listen to the realities symbolized by these human devices if he is to continue growing in full humanity, in intelligent subjectivity, and in his genuine Self.

The gains achieved by man through the development of his

bicameral brain which paved the way for the eventual rise of consciousness should not be nullified but preserved. Logic, reason, and science are important and necessary. But they should not crowd out myth, mystery, art and religion from our schools and homes. Since they are concerned mainly with the springs of man's being and nature, they keep him in touch with subterranean spaces in the psyche whose depths go beyond those of the sea and the traverseable universe.

Xavier University proposes to further aid the community in remembering its roots in the following manner. First, the university intends to build an adequate edifice wherein the material artifacts of human advance in consciousness can be housed and preserved. Therein will be displayed the proofs of past human achievements as man rose up the ladder of evolution: implements of household chores: stone and wooden pestles and mortars, grindstones, bark beaters for making tree barks into cloth; instruments for defense and life sustenance: bows and arrows, bladed weapons, native cannons, harpoons; musical instruments; drums, guitars, native violins, mouthharps, and noseflutes; bodily ornaments: beads, necklaces, headgears, breastplates, blouses and skirts. Ritual objects for worship and ceremony: altars, wooden and ivory statuettes, bamboo tubes inscribed with prayers and poems; or tree barks painted and written over with sacred words and phrases. Nor is that all. There is the rich mine of folk memory that must be opened up to unload its treasures of themes and motifs which tell of the aspirations of the people, their values and world views; the vast field of folklore, myths, legends, fables, proverbs, epics, dramas, riddles, wise-sayings, folk beliefs and customs. This is the spiritual as against the material relics of our heritage as a region or people.

This vast collection will become the grist for studies-in-depth to determine the deepest aspirations of our people down the centuries; for plotting the structures, inner and outward, of the Fili-

pino soul as these are expressed in the varied language of symbol, art and religion;

Second, the systematic and on-going collection from the field of these materials through the aid of well-trained collectors, armed with taperecorders and well-wrought questionnaires;

Third, the systematic archiving and arrangement of these materials according to the standard methods of national and international archiving techniques;

Fourth, the systematic analysis, using modern methods: thematic, functional, structural, contentual and contextual. This will enable students and investigators to isolate and identify the more dominant and overriding themes and structures of our psyche as revealed in this vast body of traditions;

Fifth, the publication of the results of study and analyses in scholarly journals, in popular magazines, comic books, in textbooks and class notes;

Sixth, through classroom instructions, the results of investigation should be fed back to our students in the elementary, secondary, collegiate and tertiary levels. This will entail curriculum-building, course offerings in the humanities, in social and behavioral science based on materials collected, archived and analyzed.

Seventh, the themes, ideals, values, and structures of individual and communal psyche which have been identified and discovered and discussed in classroom and publications should be brought down to the level of the masses through dramatic presentations adapted to the outside community in the city, the barrios and towns of the province and region. Since these materials have been drawn from the people, they naturally have strong affinity, mental and psychic, with their content. Thus when these materials are presented back to them in clearly and sharply etched dramatic forms, the people will become more fully aware of themselves; they will be in the language of social workers, conscienticized to their own realities: psychic, ethnic, social, and communal. Thus they can begin to understand themselves more deeply and widely.

The modern crop of native movies have done a lot to this effect. The popular appeal elicited by movies like *Tinimbang Ka, Ngunit Kulang; Tatlo, Dalawa, Isa;* and *Maynila sa mga Kuko ng Liwanag; Inay; Gumising Ka, Maruja* and the more recent film-standouts is proof enough of this;

Eighth, there is the further consideration of service to the government through the expanded activities of the Museo de Oro. We hope to train graduates to be well-informed and aware of their own culture, deeply understanding themselves, their strengths and their weakness, their peculiar idiosyncracies, tendencies and values. These graduates will enter the fields of politics, the army and military, the schools, the various churches, they will become the future personnel of the various government agencies; and will be the planners, innovators, future industrialists, and business magnates. They will be the leaders of the region and the country. By their deepened understanding of the Filipino soul, we hope they will be able to avoid the mistakes and shortcomings of the past: such as have surfaced of late in the north, the Pantabangan and Chico River projects, and in the south in Bukidnon and Misamis Oriental. In these projects, it seems there was a total lack of understanding on the part of the planners and the implementors. They forgot that besides logic and reason, there are dimensions in man that these alone cannot fully explore and control;

Ninth, we want our people to become mature, so that they can make democracy really work in our land. Democracy will grow in the measure that the common people also grow in social consciousness and responsibility. They will grow in this way if they are made to think for themselves and decide for themselves. Only thus will democracy, that is, the rule of the people, be safeguarded from any single man or group of men who would control and diminish the freedom which is God's greatest gift to man. For God Himself is free, and to man He has granted the power to be free like Him. Only a people fully conscious of their inner resources: mind, spirit, and will, can stand up against the corroding

effects of propaganda, pressure, and pecuniary hand-outs. This strength will come through full understanding of what it is to be a human being and a human person;

Tenth, the strategic place of Mindanao in the future development of this Republic requires the attentive and sympathetic support of all freedom-loving citizens so that the leaders of the people there, as well as the greater bulk of the people they lead, should grow in their dignity and pride in themselves, and never be ashamed of what they are: be they Manobos, Higaunons, Bagobos, Mansakas, Mandayas, Tausogs, Maguindanaos, Maranaos, Samals, Badjaos, or Yakans, or Bisayans or Tagalogs or Ilocanos, or Pangasinanes, or Ibanags—for all this motley mass of people now compose the melting pot which is Mindanao.

All this is our bag of gold. Help us bring it out of the memory and subsconscious of our people in Cagayan de Oro and Mindanao for the enrichment of our total Philippine Culture. We need to establish scholarships and professorial chairs, we need to train more competent, dedicated and conscientized young men and women to carry on the work of developing our human resources. It can then truly be said that our bag of gold is also yours.

NOTES

[1]Cf. Francisco Demetrio y Radaza, S.J. *Symbols in Comparative Religion and the Georgics,* Logos 3 (Manila: Ateneo de Mala University Press, 1968), pp. 129 ff.

[2]Francisco R. Demetrio, S.J. *Myths and Symbols Philippines* (Manila: National Bookstore, 1978), pp. 25 ff.; also *Filipino Heritage: The Making of a Nation* Vol. 1 (Manila: Lahing Pilipino Publishing, Inc., 1977), pp. 29-31.

[3]The traditional site for the original home of the Indo-Euro-

peans was said to be somewhere in Central Europe. Recently, however, through the researches conducted by Professor Marija Gimbutas of U.C.L.A., the locus has been set further eastward. Cf. also T. Hudson Williams, *A Short Introduction to the Study of Comparative Grammar* (Indo-European), (Cardiff: University of Wales Press, 1961), pp. 13-14.

[4]Ralph Linton, *The Tree of Culture* (New York: A. Knopf, 1969), pp. 179 ff; also Robert Suggs, *The Island Civilizations of Polynesia,* (Mentor Books, New York: The New American Library of World Literature, 1960), pp. 87-101, 148. Austin Coates, however, makes an interesting case for the opposite view, presenting the alternative evidence of Pacific influence on much of East Asia in his book *Islands of the South* (New York: Pica Press, 1974), xi, 196 pp.

[5]Andreas Lommel, *Shamanism: The Beginnings of Art* (New York: McGraw-Hill, 1967), passim, esp. 1 ff. & 106 & 140.

[6]Mircea Eliade, *Shamanism: Archaic Techniques of Ecstasy* (New York: Random House, Inc., 1964), pp. 200 ff.

[7]Ibid., passim; cf. also Anna Trublood Brodksy et al. (ed). *Stones, Bones and Skin: Ritual and Shamanic Art* (Toronto, Ontario, Canada: The Society for Art Publication, 1977), pp. 24 ff.

[8]Cf. Karl Rahner, *Spirit in the World* (New York: Herder & Herder, 1967), esp. pp. 179-187; 280-286; 387-408. Also cf. Filoteo Pelingon, MSC and John G. Bovenmars, MSC. *Listen! A Textbook in Philosophy of Religion* (Manila: Jesuit Educational Association, 1973), pp. 33-36.

[9]Ibid., p. 34.

[10]Ibid., pp. 38-39.

[11]Philip Sherrard, "Modern Science and the Dehumanization

of Man," *Studies in Comparative Religion,* Vol. 10, No. 2 (Spring, 1976), p. 89; cf. also Carl G. Jung, "Approaching the Unconscious" in *Man and His Symbols* (Garden City, New York: Doubleday & Company, 1969), pp. 94 ff.

[12]Ibid., p. 96.

[13]Sherrard, op. cit., pp. 88 ff; and Jung, loc. cit., pp. 94 ff.

[14]This is particularly true of the dramas of Aeschylus. Cf. H. D. Kitto, *Greek Tragedy: A Literary Study* (London: Methuen & Co. Ltd., 1968), esp. pp. vii, 29, 38 ff., 43, 45, 67-95 and passim. Also his other work *Form and Meaning in Drama.* Needless to say, the same theme is found in the works of Hesiod as well as in the poem on Justice by Solon, the Athenian lawgiver.

[15]Sherrard, op. cit., pp. 88 ff.

[16]Juan R. Francisco, *Indian Influences in the Philippines with Special Reference to Language and Literature* (Quezon City: University of the Philippines, 1964), pp. 242-245.

[17]Ibid., p. 45.

[18]Cf. Pelingon-Bovenmars, op. cit., pp. 2-5.

[19]Cf. Jung, loc. cit., passim.

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TOWARD A DESCRIPTION OF FILIPINO RELIGIOUS CONSCIOUSNESS

The topic is quite vast and wide ranging, and adequate treatment would require a lot of research. Since the time at my disposal for preparing this essay is quite short, I have decided to reduce the topic to manageable proportions. I shall not presume to cover the whole gamut of Filipino religious consciousness. Rather I have opted to briefly discuss the Filipino religious consciousness prior to the coming of Christianity and then to focus attention on the years between 1840 up to the present. In discussing the terms "religious" and "consciousness" I have drawn ideas and concepts from modern thinkers like Marcel, Rahner and Lonergan, as well as from Mircea Eliade and his school of historians of religion.

Allow me, if you please, the privilege of defining the terms of the title. The operative terms are the following: "description," "consciousness," "religion and religious" and "Filipino."

1. *Description.* By this term I mean to give some salient traits of Filipino religious consciousness. I hope you'll forgive me for being selective. But the selection will be based on historical and ethnographic sources. Part of the description will be my interpretation of the data.

2. *Consciousness.* By this I mean what most modern writers on the subject mean; that is, an awareness, a state or condition of being present to, the object of awareness. I also presume that the object of religious awareness is the presence of the Divine, not only within the religiously conscious person, but also in others

and in the world at large.

3. *Religion* or *religious*. By religion I mean the process whereby man becomes aware of the depths of his own being through the experience of what Eliade calls "hierophanies" or the manifestations of the "holy", and man's reaction or response to this presence of the divine and which may be expressed in word, image or symbol, song, dance, gesture, worship and prayer, ritual and ceremony, and, finally, celebration.

A religious man is one who is a) aware of his own being, that is, that he is present to himself existing in the world; b) that he is also aware of the being of the world. In fact, this awareness of the other is a fundamental requirement of his being aware of himself. And c) that he is aware of the presence of a Being which is different from either his own being and the being of the world, but which is at once the ground of his own and that of the world's being. Furthermore, if he is genuinely religious, then he must reduce this awareness of this Being to daily living. He must make of his life a living proclamation or witness to this presence.

In this connection, allow me to make another observation: self-awareness and awareness of the other are two important stepping stones towards the awareness of the presence of God. For this dual awareness is a discovery of the depth-dimension of human life. And to discover this dimension of depth is to discover the spirit. To discover the spirit and to shape our sensibilities, our image-making faculty, our thinking, indeed, our power to discern between values, especially between good and evil, and our power to decide in favor of the good—this is a very important ingredient in the making of a truly spiritual and religious consciousness. A truly religious man, besides, admits to himself and to the whole world that without this Being whose presence he is conscious of, he is nothing. In other words, a truly religious man is keenly conscious of his creaturehood, is truly humble. Now this is basic to a religious attitude, because this alone makes possible true worship and adoration. For this is to acknowledge that radical or

absolute goodness and worth merits praise and glory.

And to give praise and glory to the Being which founds our being and to the world's is to thank him, to magnify him, to celebrate him. This celebration is a public proclamation and attestation in word, symbol, song, dance and drama of his infinite worthiness. This celebration is not only a witnessing to the goodness of the Creator, the Ground of being—it is also a movement to union with this presence in prayer or ecstasy. Thus, in celebration and festivity, the presence of the Spirit becomes a living reality, and the individuals and the total community are aware of this presence. The entire community thinks, acts, sings, dances and lives by it and is united with it.

4. *Filipino.* I take him to mean the lowland Filipino whose ancestors, originally called *indios* or "Indians" by the Spaniards were pacified and christianized by the year 1595. I am therefore excluding the three or four million non-Christian Filipinos. Towards the end of this paper, however, I shall briefly relate the religious consciousness of the non-Christian Filipinos who are non-Muslims. Their religious consciousness has recently been elicited. This will supplement, I hope, what I believe to be the religious consciousness of the Filipino today.

Part One: Religious Consciousness of the Filipino Before the Coming of the Spaniards

In general it may be asserted that Filipinos prior to the coming of the West were already well-advanced in self-awareness. This we can gather from the most self-aware among them, their priestesses and priests, *bailanes* or *shamans.* Take for instance this traditional prayer which a Mandaya *ballyan* addresses to her *abyan* or guardian spirit, during a ceremony preparatory to a *balilig* or rite for curing a sick person:

Yangkay, Ompo, tumali kaw
Aw dili, magkutoy kaw;
Kay Ompo na bato,
Magpakagson kaw.
(Behold, great Ancestor, start stirring now;
If balilig is the cure, start swaying now;
If not, then be still; O ancestral stone, don't move.)

In this preliminary rite, the shaman wants to find out through a piece of stone (said to be inhabited by a spirit) whether the balilig curing ceremony should be gone through or not. If the stone moves, then she will go ahead and perform the actual balilig.

When the balilig proper is about to begin, the chief ballyan takes a vessel in her right hand, containing a burning piece of sweet-smelling *tullob* wood. Her left hand holds the *antall* or small altar and she starts to pray thus:

O great Ancestor
In your honor, I come to burn this incense;
To you, I hold this vessel in bloom;
O it will no longer be difficult for me,
I will no longer be forgotten by the council of
divine helpers, by the assembly of divine allies,
Pacifiers who invite one another from the different
spheres of heaven as they descend;
Who come down in one company
To this gracefully dancing ballyan
To this sweet smelling prayer woman (or man).

In another prayer, the shaman addresses her abyan thus:

In my dance do not permit me to make mistakes;
Let me commit no fault, have mercy and teach me;
Be my benevolent instructor;
You whom I constantly call upon
Whom I have often approached for help.

It is sufficiently clear then that the ballyan is self-aware and aware of the world or the other. She is also aware of the presence of the divine whom she invokes and whose aid she has constantly been calling upon. She is also conscious that these divine helpers come from the beyond, "from the different spheres of heaven." That they invite one another to come together in one company to be present to her in her prayer for curing the sick.

The Maragtas

This folkloric document contains two important items for our purpose. First, the legendary tale of the coming of Datu Puti and the nine Bornean chiefs to the Philippines, and their purchase of the island of Panay in the Visayas from the negrito chieftain Marikudo and his wife datu Maniuantiuan, for a gold *salakot* (native hat) and a long necklace of gold. The salakot was given to Marikudo, and the necklace to Maniuantiuan. Secondly, the *Maragtas* contains the so-called "Code of Kalantiaw" which is said to have been drawn up by a descendant of Datu Sumakwel, one of the ten original datus who settled on the island of Panay. The Code is reputed to have been composed during the 14th century A.D. Among its 18 provisions, we note the awareness of the hierophanies as is clear from their regard for sacred trees and places, sacred persons and their paraphernalia. Objects accorded special veneration were the graves of headmen, and the groves where the images of their ancestors or anitos were kept, as well as the caves and trees where their dead chiefs were buried. Thus we read: "They shall be put to death: who kill trees of venerable appearance." (Code VII). Or "Let no one disturb the quiet of graves. When passing by the caves and trees where they are, give respect to them." (Code VI).

Respect for certain animals is inculcated: "He shall be beaten for two days: who kills the bird Manaul (like an eagle); those who eat the diseased flesh of beasts which are held in respect; who try to kill the young of Manaul or the white monkey; those who kill

the fish called shark, or the streaked *cayman* (crocodile)." (Codes VII, X, XV). "And he who kills a black cat during a new moon is threatened with exposure to ants for half a day." (Code XIII).

The Code enjoined reverence for priestesses as well as for their sacred instruments and the anitos. "The fingers shall be cut off those who break the idols of wood or clay in their *olangans* (sacred groves) or those who destroy the daggers of *katalonas* (priestesses) for killing pigs; or break the drinking jars of the latter." (Code XVI). And again: "They shall be killed who profane sites where idols are kept, the sites where are buried the sacred things of their *diwatas* and headmen. He who performs his necessities in these places shall be burned." (Code XVII).

The ancient Filipino was convinced almost by instinct of the sacredness of power—whether it be parental authority, or the authority of the elders or *agorangs*, or of datu or maharlika, or of priests and priestesses, as well as of the authority of certain trees, animals and sites. Power is sacred. It comes not from man but from beyond. Power is from above, not from below. And even power from below, as in the case of democracy, has been bestowed from above. It is God-given.

Their keen sense of justice and fair play seems to be based on a deep-seated respect for the dignity of the person. Debts to the headmen were to be paid with promptness; nor should anyone enter the house of a chief without permission; nor should one steal the women of headmen nor the women of an agorang or elder at the risk of being exposed to ants. (Codes VII & XIV).

The equality of status that women enjoy in the Philippines is, I think, also basically an extension of this sense of justice. In marriage it is not the woman who brings the dowry. Rather it is the man. In the past, the custom among the Bisayans, whereby a young man who desired a girl for wife had to work for some specified length of time in the house of his future parents-in-law before the betrothal, was a sign of the high esteem early Filipinos had for their women.

The same theme of equality is taken up in the folktales. We have the Bisayan myth making man and woman come out of the same bamboo stem, both of them fully formed and developed, so that woman, unlike the Judaic tale, was not drawn from man, but created in her own right, separate and equal to man. Ignacio Alcina, S.J. in his *Historia de las Yslas Bisayas* (1668) recounts how Bisayan women were hard to woo even by high born and eligible bachelors.

Assessment of the Religious Consciousness Before the Advent of Spain

This phase of the religious consciousness of the Filipino may be characterized as very strong on the level of the sensible and the imagination but quite undeveloped on the intellectual level. Like most peoples in less sophisticated societies, the preconquest Filipino was sensitive to the presence of mystery around him. He responded to the presence of the divine through his symbols, myths and rituals under the leadership of his shamans or bailanes. But lacking the tools for rational analysis, he could not easily distinguish the real presence of the holy from the illusory, the divine from the demonic, true religion from magic. This faulty analysis also led him to several false inferences in matters pertaining to concrete behavior. Thus, for instance, there was the mistaken notion that life could be taken from another person in order to enhance the power of a village or tribe as in the case of headhunting or that a chief should be attended in the other world by his servants who were either killed or buried alive with him, that to have sexual relations with one's mother-in-law or sisters-in-law was not reprehensible, that drunkenness during funerary celebrations and sexual indulgence through devices like the *palang*, as well as the use of witchcraft and sorcery to destroy one's enemies, were legitimate.

We can thank the missionaries for stamping out these attitudes and customs among our forebears.

Part Two: The Religious Consciousness of the Filipinos from 1840 until 1945

This chunk of Philippine history has been chosen for describing Filipino religious consciousness because it contains perhaps some of the most dramatic events. It includes, for instance, Apolinario de la Cruz and his *Cofradia de San Jose* which was tragically suppressed in 1841. Thirty years afterwards, the sodality of the *Guardia de Honor de Nuestra Señora del Rosario* in the Santo Domingo Convent in Manila was inaugurated. This was also the period of numerous nativistic and revitalist movements in the Philippine countryside. This period also saw the rise of *ilustrados* (chief among whom was the national hero, Jose Rizal) and the propaganda movement for reforms and eventually for complete independence. This was also the period of the schism in the Catholic Church when Father Gregorio Aglipay became the head of the *Iglesia Filipina Independiente* or the Philippine Independent Church. This span of time also saw the coming of the Americans, and the Philippine involvement in the Pacific War with Japan and the restoration of Philippine political independence from America. These events significantly developed the religious consciousness of the Pilipino.

A. The Cofradia de San Jose of Apolinario de la Cruz

Born of peasant parents In Lucban, Tayabas (now Quezon Province), Apolinario de la Cruz as a young man desired to enter one of the religious orders in 1840 in Manila. Intelligent and of deep religious convictions, Apolinario was encouraged by his local parish priest to study for the priesthood. At this time ecclesiastical authorities in Manila strictly banned the recruitment of natives into any of the friar religious orders. So Apolinario became instead a lay-brother at the Hospital of San Juan de Dios. While religiously attending to his duties, he also tried to improve his knowledge and understanding of Christianity by reading the Bible

studying theological works, and listening to eminent preachers. With other lay-brothers in the hospital he discussed the idea of founding a religious organization open only to *indios.* When he broached the idea to church authorities, he was refused and his services at the hospital terminated. He returned at once to Lucban and there established the *Confradia de San Jose* (or Sodality of St. Joseph).

The Cofradia was intended to answer the needs of the native people who wanted to become more spiritually alive. Its program of activities included weekly prayer meetings in various municipalities. During these meetings, *Hermano* Puli, as he was then popularly known, would expound on a passage from the Gospels, and would lead his followers to penetrate more deeply the meaning of the life and death of Jesus Christ. He stressed especially *damay* or empathy with the suffering Lord, and the virtues of service to fellowmen and of humble acceptance of their peasant way of life, after the example of St. Joseph the humble foster father of Jesus. On the nineteenth day of every month to honor their patron, the members would converge in Lucban town, and there have a mass sung. Afterwards, there would be a convivial meal led by Apolinario. The charm and fellowship of these get-togethers was infectious and very soon the Cofradia was a very flourishing organization. It apparently satisfied the higher spiritual aspirations of the members.

Apolinario's popularity aroused the suspicion of the authorities, especially because the organization was open only to "indios with face and heart." When Apolinario applied for ecclesiastical approval of the sodality, he was again refused.

I shall leave aside the tragic end of this religious organization: how through the intransigence of both church and civil authorities, it degenerated and eventually became a dissident movement. I would like to point out, however, the religious consciousness which was very much alive in Hermano Puli and his followers, as well as in many ordinary people who flocked to hear him from

the towns and barrios of Tayabas, Laguna and Batangas. Even up to his capture and his death sentence Apolinario remained steadfast in his religious convictions. He was executed at daybreak on November 4, 1841, after having made his confession and received holy communion from a Spanish priest.

B. The Guardia de Honor

Like the Cofradia, the *Guardia de Honor de Maria* was born out of Filipino religious consciousness. It had specifically Christian, in fact, Catholic, aims: to promote Christian virtue, particularly chastity, to foster devotion to the Blessed Virgin Mary; and to increase popular participation in church functions. The provinces where it flourished were the populous coastal regions of Tarlac, Pampanga, Pangasinan, La Union, and Ilocos Sur. Also peasant-based, it was founded with the advice and blessing of the Dominican fathers in Manila, for it was in their convent that it began. But in the course of a quarter of a century, the organization underwent a transformation: millenial ethics replaced the original Christian values; the Guardia de Honor violently rejected all external authority whereas it had passively accepted traditional control systems; the members became indiscriminate in their religious, social and ethnic antipathy. They were equally hostile to hacienderos, Spaniards, Filipino revolutionaries and Americans.

Julian Baltazar who eventually emerged as the titular leader of the Guardia was not of the same talent and temper as Apolinario. He was known as an *anitero,* or native priest of the pagan *anitos,* and engaged in faith healing. His followers named him *"Apo Laqui,"* or "Sir Grandfather." His blind wife, Dolores, was simply known as a goddess. In later developments, the Guardia came under pressure from the Filipino revolutionaries and eventually the Americans, then it turned against the helpless peasantry and exploited them for food and support. It degenerated into a senseless, anarchic band of fanatics. Baltazar, after his death, was

regarded by his followers as God Almighty. His successor, Antonio Valdes, did not object to being called Jesus Christ; his second in command, Gregorio Claveria, as the Holy Ghost; a female constant companion of both, as the Virgin Mary; and the twelve lieutenants were believed to be the Savior's Apostles.

The Guardia did not measure up to the high level of religious consciousness that characterized the Cofradia. Its leadership arrogated divine power to themselves, thereby going counter to the most basic quality of genuine religious consciousness, namely, the recognition of the infinite gap that separates the Being of God from the Being of man. It also mistook the demonic for the divine. The powers assumed by the leaders were not calculated to increase genuine religious values like gratitude, childlike trust and confidence, resignation and joy in the face of sufferings, humility and loving service. Rather these magical powers were calculated to disturb, to shock or stupefy the beholders—sure signs of the demonic than of the divine.

C. Jose Rizal

Jose Rizal was the product of a religious home and a religious education. While attending classes at the Ateneo de Manila, he was an officer of the Sodality of the Virgin Mary. He was possessed with a very honest and sincere heart, a brilliant intellect and a burning love for his suffering countrymen.

As a sincere Christian he saw the gap between the preaching of Christianity and its practice by the official teachers of Christianity, the friars, as well as the Spanish officials. While abroad as a poor student, by dint of hard work and sheer talent, he produced his two novels, *Noli Me Tangere* and *El Filibusterismo,* which awakened the Spaniards both in Spain and in the Philippines to the mess they had brought the country into. His works also awakened his countrymen so that they took courage and began to agitate for reforms and put a stop to the inhumanity to which they were being subjected. Rizal agonized much over the means

he would suggest to his countrymen in seeking redress. While he was in exile in Dapitan, on the island of Mindanao in 1894, Andres Bonifacio, the founder of the *Katipunan* who set fire to the first brand of revolution, sent a messenger to solicit Rizal's support. Rizal unequivocably replied that he was not for armed revolt. His reason was practical: the Filipinos did not have the arms to fight a well-armed enemy. If hostilities broke out, many innocent people would suffer. Rizal was a believer in right reason and good order. For he knew that wicked men would espouse the revolution once it was declared, not from pure motives but from criminal ones. And so Father Florentino, the Filipino priest, in the *Noli* was made to say:

The glory of saving a country is not for him who has contributed to its ruin. You believed that what crime and inquity have defiled and deformed, another crime and another iniquity can purify and redeem. You are wrong. Hate never produces anything but monsters, and crime, criminals. No! if our country is ever to be free, it will not be through vice and crime . . . for redemption presupposes virtue; virtue, sacrifice; and sacrifice, love.

And again he speaks through another character:

We should win our freedom by deserving it, by enlightening the mind and raising the dignity of the individual, by loving the just, the good, the great to the point of being ready to die for it. When a nation acquires this stature, God himself will provide it with arms. Then the idols and the tyrants fall like a house of cards, and liberty shines forth like the day's first dawning.

When Rizal was sentenced to die, he accepted it with resignation. Without rancor, and having forgiven his enemies, he gladly offered himself to the bullets of the firing squad. But he would not die as a traitor; he turned and faced his executioners as they fired at him. In the words of his *Ultimo Adios:*

Voy a donde no hay exclavos ni opresores;
Donde la fe no mata, donde el que reina es Dios.

(I go whither there are neither slaves nor tyrants;
Where faith does not destroy, where God alone reigns.)

What more exquisite expressions of faith and religious consciousness than these? One could say that in Rizal the high point of the centuries of Christianization was reached.

Because he was a real Christian, Rizal saw the inadequacy of the religious spirit of his countrymen. In an unfinished essay which he wrote while in Europe on the "Religiosity of Filipinos," he takes his people to task for their lack of an adequate concept of God, for their split-level Christianity: going to Mass and receiving holy communion, but not hesitating to gossip over the scandals in the neighborhood; dutifully kissing the foot of a sacred statue or the hand of a priest, but cheating and deceiving their fellowmen in business. They would light candles in church, pray long *novenas,* but they would not hold back their tongue in bragging, in lying or in slandering. He criticized the religion of the Filipinos as being ritualistic rather than one of deep devotion, as being based on fear of being punished; that it was more a religion of convenience than conviction; that it had no real social dimension.

And he blamed the religious teachers for the sorry state of religion in the Philippines. By way of comment this should be pointed out. It is quite unfair to fault the Filipinos as a people for not having an adequate concept of God. For no concept of God is ever adequate. Just because they lacked this it did not follow that they had no real faith in God. For deeper than any clear and objective concept of God is what modern writers call knowledge of God by subjective implication; a knowledge that comes from the deepest layers of man's nature fashioned by the hand of the Creator; a knowledge that becomes more explicit with the act of faith, and which subsequent reflective and philosophic knowledge articulates and expresses, but which it could never pretend to substitute. For it is knowledge born from experience not from

abstraction. Rizal was criticizing from the standpoint of a rationalist. Besides, it was unfair to indict an entire people (Rizal makes no distinction) with false religiosity because of what he witnessed in and around the capital, Manila. For by the time he wrote, Manila had been opened to world trade in 1836, and the commercialistic and consumeristic spirit was very much alive among its inhabitants. He himself gives ample illustrations of this in both his novels. In a large city, there were mobs, religious mobs even, particularly during the pilgrimages and processions in honor of Our Lady of Antipolo. Surely he could not deny that there were also people in Manila and in the provinces who were possessed of a high moral sense, who tried to live up to their best lights under the lead of the Holy Spirit, who prayed sincerely, and were serious in the practice of Christian virtues. If there were bad friars, there were also many who were good, both Spaniards and Filipinos.

The fact that there were men like Apolinario de la Cruz, and Rizal's own parents who were genuinely religious, the fact that even in his own novels he alludes to persons with sterling qualities and that in those days, despite the fact that the indio was not allowed to enter the Spanish religious orders there were a good number of young men who opted for the priesthood (and there were just as many young girls if not more who felt called to the life of the vows). This shows that among the Filipinos of Rizal's time the desire for Christian perfection was alive, and that religious consciousness was high.

In the fight against the Spaniards and the Americans, there were many young men who took up arms out of real love for country and for their loved ones. Now that the local histories of the Philippines are beginning to be written, we are able to see that in the provinces there were many instances of heroism during those troubled times. And we cannot very well discount the role of religious consciousness in this heroism for patriotism or love of fatherland is a moral and even religious obligation.

During the Pacific War, the patriotism of the Filipino was no less conspicuous. The eagerness with which our young men and women responded to the call of duty is well known to local historians. Fr. Forbes Monaghan in his book on the Japanese War in the Philippines, *Under the Red Sun,* mentions many instances of young Filipino boys who went to the front lines out of genuine spirit of patriotism, and a desire to bring the war to an end that peace might be restored. I need mention only men like the late Chief Justice Jose Abad Santos who died a hero's death in Malabang, Lanao del Sur, or Manny Colayco who was blown to bits by enemy-planted bombs as he was escorting the liberation forces into the Santo Tomas University concentration camp, or Father Teddy Arvisu, a Filipino Jesuit, who signalized himself in Bataan with his self-forgetfulness in attending to the needs of his fellow soldiers. Or the many people who offered their services during liberation to help the sick, the wounded, the aged and the imprisoned.

After the war and the restoration of independence, the religious consciousness of the Filipino people continued to grow. The war taught those of us who had to live through it that man could get along with very little; that more than material goods, man needed spiritual and genuinely human support from others who shared the same predicaments as he did; that men need God most to provide them with a sense of security in a very insecure world. The Filipinos realized that the task of picking up again what remained of a battered world was a social and communal task; that all segments of society had to work together for the common good; that over and above the grudges and hatreds generated by war, if man is to remain human and not become a victim of his own hate, there must be forgiveness. The forgiveness with which the Filipinos responded to Japan's avowals of sorrow is a good gauge of their religious consciousness. I know for a fact that a number of Filipinos whose families had been hard hit by the war

volunteered as missionaries to Japan, in order to concretize their Christlike forgiveness.

Evaluation of the Religious Consciousness of the Filipino from 1840 to 1945

During this span of over a hundred years, the religious consciousness of the Filipino soared to great heights. But it also sank to low depths. Apolinario de la Cruz and Jose Rizal were vitally aware of God's presence in their own lives and in the world. Both their lives were a proclamation of this consciousness. Both gladly died to prove the truth of what they were convinced of: the love of God above all things, even above life itself. By word and deed both tried to bring others to share in their conviction of the absolute value of faith as surrender to God, so that the whole of life could be re-oriented towards him.

To an equal or lesser degree, the same could be said to the many Filipino heroes in the wars against Spain, America and Japan. Love for fellowman and for the fatherland was paramount in the hearts of those who trooped to the lines hoping that peace might be born soon and that the atrocities might end. The national act of forgiveness accorded to a former enemy country was an unmistakably high water mark in Filipino religious consciousness.

But there were also very low levels to which Filipino religious consciousness plummeted. The *Guardia de Honor* in its later phases as well as the other religious groups led by the *babailanes* in Negros, by the colorums in Samar, Cebu and Surigao, the many nativistic and revitalization movements led by men like Papa Isio and Papa Pablo—all indicated a reversion to the original religion of nature before the coming of Christianity and the achievements of reason and understanding so laboriously paid for over three hundred years succumbed under the rushing waters of irrationality which had their sources in the ancient religions. The arrogation by the leaders of these movements of divine attributes and

their reliance on magical powers and the inhuman behavior they often resorted to in order to assert their authority leaves little doubt that the demonic was at work; and the demonic is the caricature of the divine.

The same power was behind the schism of Father Gregorio Aglipay. The early planners of this break with Rome, Apolinario Mabini, Isabelo de los Reyes and Pascual Poblete were motivated by intense hatred for Rome. It must be said to the credit of Aglipay that he did what he could to stave off this break. In the end, however, he too was overcome by anger and resentment. It seems that in deciding to break with Rome, Aglipay went against his better judgment. For he knew that this decision would alienate his followers from their brothers and sisters who chose to remain within the Roman Catholic Church. The subsequent history of the schism has not been happy. The division was not conducive to the united stand needed at the start of the century for fighting the Americans as well as in seeking the grant of full independence. Besides, the Philippine Independent Church tried to rally supporters by nursing the hurts and hatreds against a regime that had ended with the Treaty of Paris. And no positive programs could result from a movement or institution that lives on the memory of wrongs and grudges. Antipathy, legal and physical struggles, nurtured by the negative stand of the Philippine Independent Church have littered the history of the country for more than fifty years. It is only recently since the advent of the ecumenical spirit that a more understanding and conciliating attitude has been adopted by the members and clergy of that church.

Part Three: The Filipino Religious Consciousness: 1946 to 1979

By this juncture in history, Filipino religious consciousness has

taken a turn for the better. The dichotomy noted by Jose Rizal between the official preaching and the actual practice appears to be narrowing, the social dimension of religion has been given due attention, and there seems to be a growing integration of faith and life.

Several factors have contributed to this high level of awareness. First of all, on the side of leadership, we have been blessed with modern popes who have been quite responsive to the needs of the Church in the modern world. From Pius XII through John XXIII, to Pope Paul VI until the present Pope John Paul II, the Filipinos like the rest of the Christian world, have been given guidance for growth in religious awareness. Since independence and the Filipinization of our educational system, there have come forth native priests with talent and tact to help the people come to terms with their vocation as Christians in the Philippines, surrounded as they are with neighbors to the north and the south who do not share in large measure their own traditions as a Christian nation. A number of these priests have been advanced to the episcopacy, and they have provided the needed thrust and direction for the believers in the nation. Among these Christian leaders should also be counted the Protestant ministers and lay persons who likewise insighted the unique position of the Philippines as a bastion of Christianity in Southeast Asia and sincerely desire the coming of the kingdom of Christ on this side of the globe.

On the level of the Christian community itself the Second Vatican Council has given the entire Catholic world and, through her ecumenical interests, indirectly, also the rest of the Christian world, an opportunity for self-examination and reassessment of communal response to the Christian vocation, especially in the face of a rapidly secularized and technologically oriented world. Guidelines for far-reaching and deeply penetrating reforms were set up especially with regard to Christian to Christian relationship through the Decree on Ecumenism; with regard to believer to believer relation through the Decree on Non-Christian Religions;

and with regard to relationship with all men of goodwill through the Decree on Religious Freedom and on the Church in the Modern World.

Within the Church the updating was just as thorough: the Constitution of the Church which defines her meaning and role in the life of the Christian, the role of the hierarchy and of the layman, the Decree on the Liturgy and the Sacraments, on the primacy of God's word in sacred Scriptures and the need to form Christian consciences through education. All these directives and guidelines for Catholic thinking and behavior have given the religious consciousness of the Filipino a new edge. Implementing the decrees of the Second Vatican have been the periodic synods of Bishops in Rome which have taken up these themes: the missions and the models of the Church vis-a-vis this new understanding of mission, the theme of popular religiosity, and the need to detect the *semina verbi* (or "seeds of the Word") in the world; the document on inculturation and the need to read in the human and cultural development of people through their particular histories, God's plan and call to them to salvation. These documents and developments have been ingredients in fashioning this new sharpness of religious consciousness in the Filipino.

The Filipino is aware of the many problems facing the whole church: population explosion and the need for family planning and the various problems it brings along; the question of aggressive posture of the big powers that threaten the peace of mankind: nuclear weapons, human rights violation, terrorism, the war refugees and the boat people, rising prices, drug addiction and exploitation of youth by business, sexism, secularism, consumerism, materialism. Like his brethren in other parts of the globe, the Filipino is expected to rack his brain for solutions. He tries to face them squarely, but he is not generally equipped with practical solutions. No matter. Consciousness does not always lead to the solution of particular problems. What is vital is that he is aware. In God's good time, a partial, if not complete, solution

will be provided. This, his faith tells him.

Today, then, the Filipino Christian is alive to the social, cultural, economic, political dimensions of his faith. Many today are convinced that one cannot be a real Christian and tolerate basic injustice on any level of Filipino national life. Today there is a stirring within the Filipino soul, not only among the concerned hierarchy, but also at the grassroots level, a sense of urgency to set things right. No longer can the Filipino be accused of being a Catholic for convenience, nor his Church as being in league with the elite and the privileged. In the slums around Manila and in other bigger cities in the provinces there is invariably a Christian social worker, a Catholic priest or a Protestant minister, or a Catholic nun, and in the relocation areas around Manila one may see a nun together with young volunteers sharing the life of the poor. In the mountain fastnesses in the northern Luzon or in the southern Mindanao, one may witness how the Church is present among the cultural communities, making them aware of their rights and obligations, of the opportunities for growth that could be theirs if they organized and worked as one in the face of the loggers and the landgrabbers. In the various coastal towns and villages throughout the land one may see community organizers stirring up the consciences of farmers, fisherfolks, jeepney drivers, and daily wage-earners, politicalizing them, instructing them on cooperatives and community building. And when evening falls, one may see many small groups gathered around a simple table, perhaps under a kerosene lamp in the hills, as they celebrate the presence of Jesus Christ in the Holy Eucharist. By these celebrations, united together with the Father and the Son through the Holy Spirit, and through them with one another and all believers, they magnify and praise the Lord, for His goodness, for allowing them to share in His life, and for renewing for them the life-giving deed of Jesus: His passion, death, resurrection, and ascension into glory.

The Mass in the vernacular is beginning to work miracles in the

Filipino religious consciousness. At long last, the Bisayan, the Manobo, the Ilongo, the Pampango, the Ibanag, and all the ethnic groupings can celebrate the most central act of worship in his own tongue. He is beginning to understand what the Mass really means: the re-presentation, or the bringing to the present again, of the redemptive suffering and death and resurrection of Christ. That it is a fulfilment of Christ's command that we are to remember Him, by repeating this sacrifice. To remember Him not only once a year, or once a month, or once a week, but as often as we can every day, so that His example of love and service of fellowmen will loom large in our daily lives, and will become a living memory. This daily remembrance of Him dying, rising and ascending into glory will ensure that His presence will be a reality in our lives.

The Tribal Filipinos' Religious Consciousness

Finally, I must say something on the religious consciousness of our non-Muslim Filipinos who are members of the so-called "tribal Filipinos" or "cultural communities." In a seminar held in Davao last November 28 to December 2, 1977, fifty-four participants, representing seventeen ethno-linguistic groups were asked to put down their own ideas on three points: first, the problems that beset their people; second, their dreams: what they would do for themselves and their people, if they were in complete control of their community's life and affairs; and third, how they would put problems and dreams together and plan for realistic action. Among the problems were a) lack of respect for their human dignity; b) lack of equality with other more advanced groups; c) violation of their freedom especially in the possession of their ancestral lands. For their dreams: they would like to be educated in the ways of civilized living, but their education should not destroy their sense of being a people with a past and a tradition that gives them identity. They would like to participate in the decisions taken by government in their development process.

Of the 17 groups participating, 15 mentioned religion as part of their aspirations. In the words of a reporter:

. . . it would seem that Christianity is the main facet of lowland culture which the minorities view in a positive light. Some groups, especially those influenced by an organized church-related program, respond positively to Christianity. Even the groups that opt for traditional religion do not speak negatively about Christianity or identify it with the exploitation practised by lowlanders. While it might be objected that the participants, being connected with church-related personnel, would tend to take a positive view of Christianity, and might not be speaking for their whole group (and there may be some truth in the objection), a negative image of Christianity doesn't seem to emerge at all. The stereotype of proselytism through pressure and give-away simply isn't there at all. It is strange that though this stereotype has been applied to Christian church work among the minorities, the respondents applied it, not to any of the churches involved in minority work, but to PANAMIN (Presidential Assistance for National Minorities) which they accused of using both pressure and payment to further their program.

We have described the early Filipino's religious consciousness then as undifferentiated. He was aware of the sacred in his environment, and he responded to it in his myths and symbols and his rituals. He discovered an ultimate reality, "an absolute in which all things are founded and in which even the self depends in its being." He discovered the sacred in power and authority, as well as in justice and fair play, in equality between the sexes. But this inability to distinguish between the demonic and the divine led the early Filipino to a number of false inferences in his daily living, some of which were clearly inhuman. These the foreign missionaries helped to eliminate by enlightening the native in the Gospels.

From 1840 to 1945, we saw the high watermark of Filipino religious consciousness in Apolinario de la Cruz and Jose Rizal, as well as in the heroes of the wars against Spain and the Americans as well as the forgiving spirit towards the enemy during the Paci-

fic War. But we also noted the nadir of religious consciousness and the reversion to the demonic, irrational elements of pre-Spanish religion in the preponderance of magic and the arrogation of divine powers by the leaders of the Guardia, the babailanes, the Colorums, and the nativistic and revitalistic movements spawned in the countryside towards the end of the Spanish rule and the beginning of the American tutelage. The Aglipayan schism was propelled by demonic values especially in its emphasis on keeping the memory of the hurts and hatreds against the Spanish oppressors, and its refusal to transcend these traumas in Christian forgiveness and the adoption of a more positive spirit for the unity of the nation and its upbuilding.

The period between 1946 until the present has been characterized by the narrowing down of the gap between official preachment and practice, thanks to excellent leadership on the highest and lowest levels. Since the Vatican Council II, the social and community dimensions of religious faith has been growing, and the indigenous liturgical movements, especially in the most central act of worship, the Mass, have helped immensely in bringing about an integration between faith and life on a very wide area. The celebration of the Holy Eucharist among the basic Christian communities every day has focused the religious consciousness of the Filipino on the need to re-present, to renew daily the saving deed of Jesus, His sacrifice of His life so that man may be forever united with God in Jesus Christ and his brethren. Thus God's living presence among men becomes a lived reality among those who believe in Christ's redemptive work accomplished in the Cross and extended through time and space in the Holy Eucharist. It is our prayer and our hope that this renewed and living religious consciousness will continue to grow despite the reverses that in the course of human history it will undergo.

May 1979

Appendix

ODE TO WATER

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'Hudor men ariston'
—Pindar

I

God spoke; and the Void was no longer a void;
For things swung into place. In the morning, the waters,
gently lapping the strands, were singing
and dancing, washing the strands of the world.
Morning of the world. But noon and eve soon came
Spreading the dust and the dusk. But dust
and dusk were not forever, for the waters,
gently lapping the strands, washed them
Away, as they rippled and rolled on the shores,
Clearing the weeds, the rotten shells, the tumbling driftwood
away, sweeping the shores clean of
the dirt and the dark for the breaking of another
Morn over the waters, washing the strands.
And the wings of the Spirit brooded over them.
God looked out and said, "It is good." Water was
good. He blessed the waters; and, in turn,
The waters blessed Him in their swell and their sway;
In their rippling and rolling, the good waters blessed Him;
Washing the strands of the world
In the morning.

What power for good or ill,
this broad-bellied billowy
brute, moonward moving?
What grit, what teeth, in this cold,
creeping creature?
What life-giving
sap, what virtues in this warm,
clinging, caressing, element?
Faceless granite
in mountain-caves and craggy beach
knows the sharpness of its teeth.
Broken dams, boulders
waist-deep in dried up river-beds;
upturned roots of *tugas* and *tangili*
disfiguring the clean-shaven side
of *Kitanglad* in September tell
of the terror of mountain-torrents.
Bermuda shafts, golden gardenias,
goldfish in the pond,
ducks with litter, brown limbs, silvered
in barrio streams—these knew
the life-bringing, pore-filling gift of God—
water.
The sunlit walls of cascading crystal
saddled and reined to dikes
and wheels and chains and wires—
all say the same thing:
water's a blessing, benevolent,
water's a bane, malevolent.
God who fashioned water, and man
Who laughs and is saddened by it in turn—
know its fast feigning
features, its scowls and its smiles.
But only He who gave water

The thirst for the moon, rolling vast shoulders
in desperate reaching out for the moon's light,
only he can fill that thirst; only He
Can raise it to heights higher than its hopes
when it builds white spires and arches
in the sky; only He can raise water
higher than its heaving towards the moon.
Beyond the moon, water was made to build
Arcades and fanes and mansions for the city
of God. I mean the brave new world
of sons that will pass through the water-gate,
At once a drowning and a recovery in Him
Who, Jonas-like, descended the depths in order
to rise again, higher, higher than the clouds,
beyond the steep moon, above the empyrean,
Into the Presence of One Who sits there
Enthroned, the jewelled Circle, Three-Ringed
Center arched over with jasper and emerald
fronting a ring of golden crowns on white raiment,
And a whole sea of glass, three times named,
Holy, Holy, Holy, *El Gibbor.*
His the pattern traced for all
Who, like Him, through death, would enter
into Life.

II

Noonday in Paradise. Adam was at rest.
Eve was bathing in the Tigris, the fourth
Of the rivers that watered the Garden. On lip
of the river a tree, branches bent with fruit,
Red fruit, fruit in mouth. His talk
of godlikeness, scaling the heights
of Godhead, of homage of wings, of gazing

Into the heart of mystery, the mystery of good,
And the mystery of ill. Fruit was fair,
Glorious to see. Delights in the tasting!
But a ban the Lord God proclaimed, with severe
Admonition, for themselves and their kin.
From tongue of Tempter fruit fell—
Flashes on the waters—Eve called to Adam
at rest in their bower. Come, beloved,
A morsel of this peerless fruit.
The morsel taken the sting of ill awoke
In his loins, and his children's.

III

The waters were clear and gay when Eve
Stepped into the river that day, clear as her eyes,
Gay as her heart; now they were dark and grey.
Motionless a while, until
From the distance they trembled with dread
At the curse of the thunder. Then they swayed and they curled
And they lashed at each other; they raced to the shores
Furious steeds, frothing and snorting
Under the spurs of terrible riders.
The deed was done. The curse was closing
Around them. Voices Eve heard on the waters—
Not the voices of laughter as they sang and danced
Long ago in the morning. But voices that told
Of sorrow, noises that portended gloom
And the grave. In the tense, dense air she listened,
Could make out Noah's name, the ark and the deluge.
One voice told of Lot and his wife. Another still
of Sodom and Gomorrha, and the Sea called Dead.
Voices murmured the names of populous
Cities long since buried under

The sea. Yet other names were sounded Armada,
Titanic, Leyte, Taiwan. The song
Of waters harsh, rasping, metallic,
The waters that hymned in harmony with early
Creation. Still other voices echoed
The rush and rage of mountain-floods
Whelming logs and limbs of beasts
And of men; of swollen seas grudging
The birds their nests of tidal waves,
The chaos of the Void, the lawlessness primeval.

IV

The Lord came and consorted with Adam.
For the last time. He spoke over the noises of the rivers
And His voice whipped red into the face
Of man. It was no blessing He spoke
Over the waters. But the *ara* that bound
Him to earth all his days, to till, to master,
To twist its stubborn will till it bring
Bread for his board wine for his cup, oil for his lamp. She was doomed
To suckle her young with the milk of her breast.
And past the pains of birth. Even then she could feel
The tug in her womb, which foretokened her heart's tearing
When, on her lap, she shall lay the limp
Abel, slain by the hand of a brother.
With her tears she shall water the dead, as
To wash the stain off the hand that had struck.
But in vain. She must wait for the Rain that will drop
With the thrust of the lance, in God's good time.

V

In His goodness, God, even amid the crack
Of His anger, proclaimed redemption
Of man through the Woman. As if, at once,
To prophesy the redemption of water, God foretold
To her as she stood weeping with him
On the bank of the river, that someday her tears
Will be dried, when from another Stream
Will flow Waters that will redeem the Waters,
Will redeem her tears and give her joy.
Then her curse and the curse of the rivers
Through the sin of man will be broken
Through the power of Water mingled with Blood.
For the Blood and the Water welling from the Side
Of the Son of the Woman shall wash the blood
And the water, that both might be means for the washing
Of sin. Once again the Spirit shall breathe
On the waters and God His blessing shall resay
Over them. And again the waters shall be good.
With water redeemed, a new Man will be born,
The race of men freed from the power
Of the demons of rivers and waters and voices
And the noises that possessed them since Eden's doom;
And who, being born once again with water
and the Spirit, shall inhabit the Kingdom prepared
For them from the morning of creation by the One
Who sits unseen on the jewelled throne.
Thus even amid the discordant chorus of the rivers,
Shrill, sinister chorus of ill,
There arose distinct, though ever so often
Dimmed by the din of dissonance,
Laughing accents telling of Galilee,
Bethesda's pool, Siloe's currents,

And the sea named Red; Lepanto, La Naval,
The miracle of the marriage at Cana, the sparkling
Waters of the Jordan, the full pitcher
Borne by the man the Apostles followed,
Jacob's well, and living springs in the hearts of men.

VI

On the wave-washed shores of Ionia
lithe athletic limbs were quiet
listening to the master. Thales, the seer,
was telling his pupils that things
are fresh deep down with the freshness
of water; "for water is the seed of things,"
he said. "And more, all things are alive
and full of gods. For the magnet lives
as water lives, see, it vapors, hardens, melts."
Mid wheels all aglow as the horse cleared the posts
on the *dromos,* mid the cheer and the dust
and the palm, Pindar, the Theban, sang a song:
"Ariston men hudor!" (Water's the best
of all.) Though a bit hyperbolic, this paean
Pindaric is yet ancient witness
to a truth with a freshness: that water is good.

VII

If wetness be freshness, and freshness life,
Thales, perhaps foretokened the gladness
In store for the races, when He, sent to freshen
The face of the world, would, by the Jordan, be merged
Homeless and lost, with the crowd of sinners;
To be pulled by John from the waters; while He prayed,
Over the waters the wings of the Spirit
Were spread and the thunder of the Voice thrilled

The wavelets, so they twirled and swirled as the echoes
That faded above them told of this Man's
Wonder, His oneness with the One.
Told of deep divine pleasure over the treasure
Hid in His side to be dug by the point
Dipped red in blood mingled with the flood.
The waters were bright and gay that day;
They whirled out in circles as they sang and danced,
The miracle was breaking upon them, the curse
Was fading and God once again shall bless them
And they, in turn, once again shall bless Him.

VIII

Candace's eunuch was riding a carriage
with Philip who spoke of the Man-That-Was-Lanced.
They came to a halt by the lip of a river.
Under the breeze, the wavelets quivered and curled,
fanned by invisible wings.
No voice spoke over the waters, but within
the heart of the heathen, the word spoke
breaking the Night, freeing the Light.
Philip pulled the man out of the waters
refreshed—his innermost self in ivory
robed, though outwardly, still in ebony cast.
Away in the clouds, that day, black little
Cherubs sang away with greater glee
At the foot of the Lamb-that-was-Lanced.
Henceforth, in the flood from His Side, God again
speaks the word. And the wings of the Spirit are again
on the waters. As they ripple and roll, a new world
is born

DRIP
DROP
DRIP DROP
DRIP
DROP
over the forehead;
the new world is born, "In the name . . .";
the forehead is signed to the Godhead; old limbs
lap strength to scale the steeps of Divinity
being whelmed in the flood; and out the waves
are flung not saline seaweeds, not rotted
shells, nor tumbling driftwood, but smooth-
skinned, smooth-limbed, living Limbs
that the Body may be formed out of choice Members,
that the Members and the Body together may be one
with the Head; that the Head and the Body together
may put on the features of the Son; that His fulness
from eternity fixed may be filled; that the fragments
of creation gathered together again
under the blessing of sons may resume
the full roundness of the full Moon
chanting with the Son
His paeans of palms
as He bears the rod
in His Kingdom of Love
with the One Circle
Three-Ringed Center
of the Universe
In the Morning.

IX

The new world is born by the voice of the Word
And the curse is undone on the soul, the curse
Is undone in the woman, the curse is undone
On the world, undone on the waters, on the rivers undone.
For the Lance-Tapped-Well overflowed in a deluge
Whelming and washing the rivers and fountains
And the streams from the mountains as they hurry to sea.
So the waters have washed the strands
of this world of dust and of dusk;
of dead shells and deadlogs; clearing the shores
for the breaking of the new day building
the world for the city on high
reaching for the Moon and beyond
the moon into the Presence
the One Circle, Three-Ringed Center
of the Universe. By the power of the One
Three times named Holy, Holy, Holy
El Gibbor.

X

And they sing once again, as they sang long ago
In the morning; blessing God for His goodness,
The source of their gladness; thanks to the Stream
From the Rain that flowed over with Redness from the Side
of the Man-That-Was Lanced. God is good. Water
Is good. Thanks to the Tide from the Side
Of the Man-That-Was-Lanced.

His the pattern. In his footprints,
The world must plant its own
If through death, it would enter into Life.

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